The Devil is Disorder: Bodies, Spirits and Misfortune in a Trinidadian Village

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Thesis submitted for a doctorate in Social Anthropology

I, Rebecca Lynch confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

ABSTRACT:

This work examines constructions of the body, health, illness and misfortune in a Trinidadian village to consider how anxieties about risky and changing life circumstances are dealt with through cosmological frameworks. As such these discussions hope to contribute to the study of changing frameworks (particularly in relation to the growth of Evangelical Christianity), modernity in relation to post-colonial states, as well as to thinking on the body and health in medical anthropology. This is undertaken through the production of a detailed and ethnographically-grounded account of discourses and practices in a village that perceives itself as marginal to the rest of Trinidad. The growth of crime and violence in Trinidad more broadly forms a background to everyday life, which I link to the growth of Evangelical Christianity in the village. I suggest that this Evangelical Christian cosmological framework develops from, and contributes to, existing cultural understandings and provides a meaningful and constructive way of dealing with changing circumstances for those in a marginal position. Examining how such cosmological ideas are discussed and become 'known', as well as how they are made through discourses and practices, I propose that this framework gives more comprehensive protection from risk than previous understandings of spirits. Furthermore, through a focus on the individual, individual health and individual bodies, those in the village are able to deal with the anxieties of everyday life without recourse to (what are seen as) ineffective and uninterested State institutions.

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1. Introduction

> *1:6 Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them. 1:7 And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. 1:8 And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? 1:9 Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? 1:10 Hast not thou made a hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. 1:11 But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face. 1:12 And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD.*

Job, 1: 8-12, New King James Version (NKJV)

Across the eight churches in and around the rural Trinidadian village[1] where I was based, it was the biblical story of Job that I heard most frequently referred to in sermons and by those I spoke with. Part of the Old Testament, the Book of Job addresses the problem of human suffering and why good, God-fearing and righteous people may suffer despite their faith in God. Job is described as a successful and wealthy man, and a good and faithful follower of God. God

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[1] While I employ the terms ‘village’ and ‘local’ throughout this work, these are intended to refer to a space that hangs together through various tensions rather than necessarily a geographical location and which is bounded in its ability to be distinguished from the not-village and not-local. My use of these terms to describe my fieldsite and its boundaries are examined in more detail in Chapter 2.

allows Satan to test Job's faith by causing him to suffer the loss of his family and goods, even afflicting him with boils covering his body. Still Job refuses to curse God. Eventually God returns all he had lost back to him and more. Through standing by God despite the inflictions and disasters dished out to him by the Devil, Job was eventually rewarded, although there was a long period of suffering without God apparently working for him or being present in Job's life.

This story and its themes stood out amongst the many other village discussions of an omniscient and in-control God and a working Devil. Clearly there was something about Job's predicament and the positions of God and the Devil within this that spoke to people locally and that they found to be particularly meaningful, and people drew on this story to talk about their own suffering. Job was therefore also a theme running through my work, particularly as my central concern- how people locally discussed and framed illness- was also a discussion about misfortune, why people might suffer and the role of God and the Devil in this.

In the discussions that follow I focus on understandings of illness, health and the body within wider cosmological understandings of a moral order. Moral ordering lays out the world in particular ways but furthermore suggests a way that things *should* be. Living and sustaining such an order is not straightforward and calls for a constant crafting through discourse and practices. Recalling and discussing the Book of Job was part of crafting this moral order, and an element of particular value for those in the village to explain current circumstances. Through the upcoming chapters I examine some of the discourses and practices that go into crafting a local moral order, particularly in relation to health, illness and the body, and to wider understandings of misfortune and village positioning. These understandings are culturally and historically situated, drawn from the experiences of those in the village and their interpretations of contemporary events. Such understandings are constantly produced and re-produced locally, drawn upon on some occasions and not on others, but forming a background to everyday life in the village.

Tina

Like many other people locally, Tina[2] had little money to live on. She lived alone in a small property in a central area of the village. Her main income came from the local government employment programme where she cut back the fast-growing bush from encroaching on the roads in and around the village. This was supplemented by the little she made from selling her own home-made sweets to tourists along the nearby beaches- like many other people locally Tina 'hustled' by, getting through from various informal income sources. Tina regularly attended both the Seventh Day Adventist church and the Independent International Baptist Church, and knew that the good relationship she maintained with God through her own prayers and conversations with Him meant that He would look after her. Despite her meagre earnings, she always dressed respectably, wearing nicely cut dresses to the many church services she attended through the week, walking to and from these and her job since, like most people locally, she did not own a car. Occasionally Tina would take *maxi-taxis* (minibuses) or the bus towards the East-West Corridor and Port of Spain to visit her sister or other family members who lived and worked there. Rather than going to join them for employment that would have paid her more and was more reliable, Tina preferred to stay living in the village where she had grown up which had a friendly, community-based atmosphere, where the air was less polluted and where there was less violent crime. While there were others in Trinidad whose lives were filled with more money, more goods and more power, including those in the government who controlled and chose where to distribute national resources (like the employment programme for which she worked, subject to cuts and changes), this was not Tina's life and she did not regularly encounter such people. Instead Tina prayed for the good of her nation,

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[2] All names in this paper have been changed but in so doing they continue, where appropriate, to reflect the custom of nicknames ('home names') given by local community members to refer to other community members. These were more frequently applied to men than women, and Tina, like many other women in the village, did not have a nickname. Throughout the work, local terms for plants have been used and are indicated in italics. Local terms more generally are also indicated in italics, while phrases are in speech marks.

that the Devil would not work through those with power and money to destroy Trinidad and its people. Perhaps, as others in the village told me they did, this also included praying for the Afro-Trinidadian and Christian PNM government to return to power, toppling the COP-UNC coalition government dominated by Indo-Trinidadians who were largely Hindu. Other people had told me or insinuated that it was likely that these politicians, individuals with power and money, had struck deals with the Devil to gain such positions in the first place. Hindus were also often locally framed as devil-worshipping in part because they were seen to worship multiple gods, so the connection between success, power and devilish-interference was perhaps particularly easy to make in relation to successful Indo-Trinidadian politicians and businessmen. Tina did not have money or position but she strove to be a good Christian and knew that she had a good relationship with God as she spoke and prayed to Him daily. Despite her daily struggles, through her faith she was confident that she was ‘good with God’.

Compared to the successful and rich people who worked with the Devil, the poorer situation of those locally could therefore be read as demonstrating how far the local community was from the Devil, their lesser material wealth and position indicative of their higher morality. Why then might God allow the suffering of those who live such good Christian lives? Why did they not also have success and wealth? Tina, like other people locally, turned to the story of Job for her explanation. Through the story of Job it was demonstrated that sometimes there could be suffering of good Christians without apparent reason and which had not been brought on the individuals through their own actions- in fact it was their very morality and Christianity which meant that they should suffer. As God remained in ultimate control, like Job it was important to continue to trust in Him, to live as a good Christian and all would be well. Rather than engage in political protest or fight to change her current circumstances, Tina continued to focus on her own personal relationship with God and her own moral behaviour as a good Christian. It would be God who would see her through, who allowed her to eat and get by each day: it was God who was in control.

Tina's individual actions placed her in a particular moral position therefore. She worked on her own morality through her faith and Christian actions, partly through taking care of her health and body as both were given by God with a responsibility to take care of them. Her relative poverty and life struggles demonstrated that she did not work with the Devil and her continual presence at church and her testimonies of how God had worked in her life demonstrated her moral, Christian nature. While God was in ultimate control, it was Tina's actions that created her moral standing, and being a good Christian this suggested that God would look after her needs, keeping her healthy, housed and fed. In the context of the village therefore, ill health was a result of both physiology and cosmology, which were themselves connected. My ensuing discussions examine how people understood the body, health and illness in the village but as an integrated part of this therefore, also cosmological understandings of *why* someone becomes ill. Morality and the embodiment of morality, including material changes to the body itself, were therefore central components of these conceptualizations. While explanations of illness causation may be a gateway through which broader discussions of misfortune and morality can be explored- as seen in the classic work of Evans-Pritchard[3] (1976[1937])- I use understandings of illness to examine both wider cosmological understandings, and how these are crafted and expressed through discourses, actions and the material world itself, and further, why such understandings might be taken up. Through my research then, I seek to draw out and conceptualize ideas of illness causation, misfortune and morality, linking these to the wider socio-political context in Trinidad, and arguing that morality and moral orders were created and embodied not only through discourse and practices but also interwoven in the materiality of the body as the individual, and the nation, strove to protect themselves from evil forces. Furthermore, morality and moral orders were ways of understanding circumstances, discourses and practices, providing

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[3] Work which of course also challenged understandings of rationality.

interpretation and meaning, and a framework within which individuals could themselves act on the world.

Moral orders and moral ordering

Cosmological understandings contain a moral order in which people, institutions, organizations, events, objects and spirit agents are situated. I use the term 'moral order' in this context as the order of meanings and values through which subjects are defined in a cultural space. This is an overarching system in which subjects are given a moral positioning: some people/organizations/things/spirit agents may be more 'moral' than others- what is considered 'moral' altering in different cultural settings. Douglas argues that people order and categorize the world to be able to make sense of it and to deal with its complexity (1966), and Durkheim saw morality as a form of social solidarity which kept society together (1915). Both Douglas' and Durkheim's approaches imply that an order is somehow fixed and enduring and understood by all to become 'true'.

However cosmologies and moral orders are not 'naturally' occurring and enduring, but are crafted on a daily basis through practices (including bodily practices), and through discourses which interpret and seek to understand practices and events. These understandings do not exist 'out there' as fixed entities but are merely stable concepts continually re-made and refined on a daily basis to be seen as a 'natural'[4] ordering- and the way in which the world works and should work. As these understandings are lived they are constantly being added to, refined and reinforced, not part of a cohesive frame that is

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[4] The work of anthropologists such as Strathern (1988) and Martin (1991) have demonstrated that what are thought to be 'natural' relationships and innate characteristics can be culturally constructed and created. Furthermore, as those working in Science and Technology Studies (STS) have demonstrated, even scientific understandings and conceptualizations of the world are culturally situated and constructed, questioning the assumed 'naturalness' and neutrality which often accompany these (e.g. Knorr-Cetina, 1999; Latour, 1998; Latour and Woolgar, 1979; Mol, 2002).

external to individuals, as Durkheim (1915) suggests, but integrated within and emerging from everyday life. Experiences such as sickness and misfortune (and health and success) are examples of ways through which these cosmological understandings and moral orderings are made (and re-made) so that focusing on health, illness and the body, as well as wider cases of success and misfortune, allows a consideration as to how a moral order can be crafted from the complexities of everyday life.

Defining moral order in the context of the village

In Christianity broadly, ones moral positioning is connected to being a good Christian: good Christians are 'moral' people.[5] In different societies what it may mean to be a good Christian may differ of course, and in the village being a good Christian was largely related to actions. If the individual took care of their family, community and neighbours by attending to their welfare, worked to legally obtain their income and did not drink or smoke to excess, take drugs or have sex with multiple partners and had a Christian faith, they were see as moral. Individuals were 'more moral' if they had an active relationship with God (including through regular prayer for example) and 'less moral' if they engaged in the above practices, so that scales of morality emerged on a local level.[6] Practices therefore indicated the kind of person someone was and thus their positioning on the moral order.

Moral positioning was also attributed by others, so while one might strive to be as good and moral as possible, others' interpretations of their actions were used to judge an individual's morality. Comments not only on what someone had

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[5] Within evangelical Christianity in particular, those who are immoral are associated with the Devil- they are part of the moral order but at the opposite end to the good Christian, far from God and close to the Devil.

[6] It is worth noting that none of these practices linked to attendance at a particular church, nor to church attendance more broadly. However church leaders (and their families) were held to the highest expectations of good Christian behaviour, often leading to accusations of hypocrisy if they were not seen to match up.

done, but speculation on their reasons for doing this, formed part of this interpretation and understanding of moral position, an individual's perception of their moral standing often being at odds with the understandings of others in the village.

As part of this moral ordering there were also expectations of circumstances that aligned with moral positioning- that there were just rewards for those who practiced good Christian values. Those who were better Christians and morally higher *should* have better social and economic circumstances than those further down the order, they *should* prosper for their good actions while the immoral *should* fail and/or be punished. This was the operation of a just world so that moral order also indicated the way in which the world *should* work, not merely describing how the world was. While the Bible gives many examples of good Christians who are rewarded in life and able to prosper, Job provides an example of a good 'Christian' who goes through a period of loss and misfortune *because* of his high moral positioning. There were many people on a local level who could therefore identify with Job: they were good Christians and yet, like Tina, were not receiving the rewards and prosperity that came with high moral positioning, especially as others who were clearly less moral (such as Hindu politicians and businessmen), appeared to be thriving. This identification with Job did not disrupt or go against a wider moral order of divine justice, but was therefore indicative of occasions when what *should* happen did not occur, and how the Devil operated to disrupt this world order.

Moral ordering in the context of the village included not only people but also spirit agents, so God, the Devil and good and bad spirits were also integral parts of this, God and the Devil forming the two poles of such an order. This moral order also stretched beyond the village to include those in other parts of Trinidad, the Caribbean, and in the rest of the world more broadly. Since the first priests arrived in Trinidad (and other Caribbean islands) to missionize the local population in the 17th century, the Caribbean has always had links with other parts of the world, developed further through slavery, colonialism, international trade and the US airbases on the island between 1941-1950 (Brereton, 2009). These important developments have significantly contributed to the shaping of Trinidadian culture as well as of the nation itself, so subjects beyond Trinidad form an intrinsic element in any cosmological and moral view of the world from the village. Furthermore, the historical background of Trinidad has seen different cultures coming to the island- from Europe, West Africa, India and China- under different circumstances. These have created both cultural and religious divisions and animosities as well as a unified concept of being Trinidadian- the notion that despite such differences, 'all o' we is one'. This moral ordering is another way of expressing the mixed set-up of Trinidad within a wider system- all groups of people were fitted into this moral order including Hindus, Muslims, Orisha and other Christian denominations in Trinidad. While all are Trinidadian and all have a place in the system, some were more moral than others.

Austin-Broos discusses the politics of moral order in the context of Jamaica and elsewhere (1991; 1997; 2005) noting how moral orders can be used politically against particular groups for particular reasons. She notes that the body in particular is a site of morality on which moral order is placed and which indicates the morality of the individual- the body symbolically 'linking matter with values' (2005, p183). She uses the example of imbuing the body with morality through 'racing': notions of race that are then ascribed to the body. Skin colour but also 'colour' as seen through other bodily features, such as a particular kind of nose, can be ways in which a body is 'raced' and particular values and attributes attached to it. Bodies themselves can thus be tools in the legitimization and maintenance of a hierarchy (Austin-Broos, 2005): moral orders may be written on the body. For Durkheim (1915) moral order was external to the body, and, through Austin-Broos' examples, we see that morality can be symbolically embodied. However in the village, morality could be both symbolically and materially expressed, created and reinforced through the body and bodily practices. The material condition of bodies, as well as practices, suggested a form of moral value and position- healthy bodies were bodies in which the Holy Spirit dwelt, while unhealthy bodies were 'empty' or housed a devilish spirit. Moral order therefore implicitly had a material element as these cosmological understandings were also expressed through the physical- through the body, but also through material goods and money and the physical landscape of Trinidad as a nation. By examining understandings of the body, health, and illness and wider notions of prosperity and misfortune in the context of the village, a moral order not only emerges but is made and re-made through material items as well as through practices and discourses.

Health, sickness and morality

Explanations of illness are a classic focus within medical anthropology, and indeed for some, medical anthropology's fundamental role. The classic distinction between disease and illness, the former referring to the physiological expression of the sickness (and the domain of the medical profession), the latter referring to the experience of the sickness (the domain of medical anthropologists and sociologists) suggests that explanations of illness and concepts of the body, health and illness are key to anthropologists' understanding of the medical. Kleinman's work on what he terms 'explanatory models' in medical anthropology (1980)-patients' 'lay' understandings of the basis of their sickness, as opposed to the clinical or biological (and 'real') cause- has been highly influential and is still used as a basis for investigating patient perspectives both within medical anthropology and by clinicians.[7] Such 'lay' perspectives may offer not only a physiological understanding of the body but also more spiritual understandings of illness, contextualized within the patient's wider cosmological worldview. These are seen to sometimes provide answers to the question of *why* an individual becomes sick, as well as *how*- Evans Pritchard's *umbaga*, or 'second spear' in Zande cosmology (Evans

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[7] Kleinman's interview questions for drawing out a patient's explanatory model (EM) have been added to the latest version of the DSM (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

Pritchard, 1976).[8] Taussig (1980) takes issue with this broader understanding of Zande metaphysics however, and proposes that anthropologists have misconstrued Zande epistemology in separating the ‘how’ from the ‘why’, or as Taussig sees it, ‘fact’ from ‘value’.[9] These may not be emic distinctions, he suggests, but our own readings of Zande epistemology (1980, p4) as for the Azande these ‘how’ and ‘why’ explanations are ‘folded into one another; aetiology is simultaneously physical, social and moral’ (Taussig, 1980, p4).

These cultural readings of Zande cosmology are based largely on Euro-American conceptualizations of divisions between ‘the medical’ and ‘the religious’, and, as Good (1994) notes, Euro-American cultures place understandings of suffering- the soteriological- under the realm of medicine so that they become ‘medical’ concerns.[10] Such a split between medicine and religion (‘rationality’ and ‘irrationality’), within Euro-American cultures can be seen as a product of the Enlightenment and these divisions are not so visible in ethnographies which focus on cosmological understandings outside these cultures. For example, in the work of Robert Dejarlais in Nepal (1992) understandings of illness and the body are connected with broader spiritual ideas, and Carol Delaney’s work in Turkey also links cosmological ideas to broader understandings of gender and social organization (1991). However while these concepts are *theoretically* divided in Euro-American cultures, as Latour (1993) argues, this does not necessarily occur in practice – like many other categories, such dichotomies are rarely ‘lived’ in this way: we have never been ‘modern’ in this sense.

Clear demarcation of what is ‘religious’ and what is ‘medical’ also fails to engage with the ways in which health and illness are themselves embedded in

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[8] Lewis (1989), amongst others, suggest these are missing from biomedical explanations but which can complement, or supplement biological understandings without undermining them.

[9] Taussig also challenges the assumption that patients in Euro-American (and by implication, other) cultures ask themselves the same questions as the Azande (1980).

[10] Furthermore such approaches suggest that in general ‘the medical’ and ‘the religious’ can be clearly sectioned off from each other and from other aspects of daily life.

morality,[11] the patient's model of illness differing from the clinician's understanding 'not in terms of exotic symbolization but in terms of the anxiety to locate the social and moral meaning of the disease' (Taussig, 1980, p13). Turner notes the early Christian understandings of sickness as related to sin, pointing out that the terms 'malady' and 'malaise' come from the Latin *malus* meaning evil (1995, p20). Young suggests that some instances of sickness perform an ontological role, similar to that found in religious rituals, which 'enables sickness episodes to communicate and confirm ideas about the real world' (1975, p.5). Young proposes that practices around sickness reaffirm a particular model of reality, that praxis has an ontological role as sickness challenges meanings, medical understandings and practices and organizes these into an event reinforcing wider forms and meanings (1975, p19). An example of this is Last's paper on prognosis in a Hausa farmstead, which demonstrates that Muslim Hausa link the timing of an illness to Allah's wishes and Allah's timing- illness events therefore also demonstrating what Allah's wishes are and how Allah works with time (2007). Cases of ill health can bring cosmological understandings to the fore, as Taussig suggests: 'The everyday routine of more or less uncritical acceptance of the meaning of life is sharply interrupted by serious illness which has its own pointed way of tuning all of us into metaphysicians and philosophers' (Taussig, 1980, p4). Ill health is a disruption in everyday life that calls for explanations which are not only medical but also cosmological. Sickness is a moral event.

The moralization of particular illnesses in relation to individual actions can also be linked to Protestant conceptualizations. Turner notes that in Weber's understanding, the development of Protestantism moralized actions so that some sicknesses seen to be the result of immoral actions could themselves be

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[11] Etically and emically it makes no sense to classify a particular action as 'religious', 'medical' or 'magical' for example, but classifying practices broadly as moral/Christian or immoral/unchristian have greater local salience. Notions of actions as moral or immoral cross different domains of categorizations, however actions and interpretations of these are not rigidly fixed.

moralized (Turner, 1995). Blame could be attributed for a lack of self-care, or an engagement in actions which then caused the disease- the sick had brought such afflictions on themselves. In the Trinidadian context, as well as particular health conditions being moralized as the result of an individual's poor behaviour and decision-making (e.g. the moralization of sexually transmitted infections and alcohol-related illnesses), more generally suffering from illness, or being healthy, reflected personal morality. Instead of Evans-Pritchard's reading of a 'how' and 'why' split in relation to illness, they were intertwined, as was the case for Taussig's patients. Moving on from focusing on patient's explanatory models therefore, or on solely 'medical' or 'religious' understandings, this research examines the wider cosmological framings of a community to consider concepts of the body, health and illness[12].

Conceptualizing the cosmological

Cosmological understandings are not always clear-cut or fully elaborated, including to individuals themselves. Novel or changing circumstances may require new interpretations whilst some aspects of life can be lived without being consciously framed within a wider cosmology. Furthermore, these understandings may be drawn from, and relate to, various sources- cultural socio-political understandings, ideas of agency, personhood and self as well as from different religious and spiritual concepts and local medical, biomedical and scientific knowledge. I conceptualize cosmological understandings as amalgams of grouped cultural ideas which hang together. They are not a cohesive and bounded whole, and might be viewed in the same way as Strathern's partial connections (2004[1991])[13]- they are understandings which 'hang' together. There is a messiness to these amalgams, and boundaries are not always clear, but links between the component elements can be strong. It is

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[12] For a more recent collection of the examination of cosmologies in medical anthropology (particularly in relation to mental health) see Littlewood and Lynch, 2016.

[13] Or indeed Mol's coordination of the different bodies constructed by different experiences (clinical, laboratory-based, surgical, personal) of atherosclerosis (2002).

these messy amalgams of coalescing concepts that I term ‘cosmological’ rather than ‘psychological’, ‘ontological’ or ‘philosophical’ understandings. These concepts overlap on some levels and in relation to the basic understandings of a culture and cultural system which links, conceptualizes and categorizes both human and non-human agents and actions in a broader framework. However I use the term cosmology to imply a wide but not consistently developed set of ideas where understandings can change over time, be influenced by new thinking and new information and can be contradictory and not necessarily acted upon.[14] As well as being amalgams of concepts, these cosmologies are also amalgams of practices, discourses and material elements, all locally situated and continually being crafted.

To situate practices and understandings in relation to illness and to be able to take account of the differing responses, conceptualizations, and times when these are more prevalent than others, I move away from the concept of ‘beliefs’ that is often applied when examining these, to follow Barth (2002) and Velho’s (2007) suggestion that religion, and in this case, cosmological understandings, may better be conceptualized as knowledge or as *ways of knowing*. The notion of a ‘belief’ implies a fixed understanding and suggests a resulting action that relates directly to that belief, something which may not necessarily hold in practice and is limited when it comes to conceptualizing that an individual may hold multiple ideas about similar things. To have competing ways of knowing is less problematic than the idea of holding competing beliefs, and allows for the notion that different forms of knowing might be drawn on at different times in relation to differing circumstances. ‘Knowing’ also lacks the pejorative connotations of beliefs (Needham, 1972).[15] In both the anthropology of religion and the anthropology of medicine, the use of the concept of ‘belief’ has been

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[14] Power also understands cosmologies in a similar way; as not static but changing over time (1987) although he does not follow this conceptualization through further.

[15] As Latour notes, lawyers do not *believe* in the law, the law is just the law without room for discussion as to whether someone *believes* in this or not (2004). This can also be linked to Good’s argument that biomedicine suggests that lay understandings of illness are *beliefs* which can be compared to scientific *knowledge* (1994).

seen as problematic and de-legitimizing, but furthermore, thinking of cosmologies as ways of knowing can itself be productive in conceptualizing these.[16]

Cosmologies as ways of knowing

Hobart reminds us of '…the importance of treating knowing as a practical, situated activity, constituted by a past, but changing, history of practices' (1993, p17)- as Haraway also suggests, knowledge is situated (1991) in time, space and place. Knowledge thus emerges from particular situations and is constantly being altered and influenced by people, things and the environment: as Ingold and Marchand note, it is gained along 'paths' through life. For Ingold,[17] becoming knowledgeable is not a matter of assembling information but rather he proposes that knowledge is formed in (and through) everyday activities so that knowledge is 'coterminous with our movement through the world' (2010). Marchand points out that knowledge is therefore not passed on solely through ready-packaged and direct cultural transmission, as is implied in the work of earlier anthropologists (Marchand, 2010b).[18] Knowing can thus be seen as a practical and continuous activity, not static and fixed. Over time and through alterations in relationships between people, things and environment, what is known can change as knowing is always bound up within the wider world-

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[16] Through conceptualizing cosmological understandings as ways of knowing, I also attempt to level the hierarchy that implies that some understandings are more valid or important than others. While I use this reframing as a conceptual tool to do this analytically, it is worth noting that those in the village do themselves place more value and validity on some understandings over others. Whether conceptualized as beliefs or ways of knowing, ideas about the world were not accepted unquestioningly; individuals disputed, experimented and played around with these concepts – there was not a simple passing down of ideas from one generation to the next.

[17] Concepts of wayfaring and the surfaces involved in wayfaring are seminal to Ingold's framing. He suggests that knowledge is not built from data acquired at static positions, or from carefully selected vantage-points, but grows and changes with human subjects and the world through which they journey. The body is entwined with things and the environment to create knowledge, rather than embodying these (Ingold, 2010, pS136).

[18] In fact the Herskovits' work in the same area of Trinidad in the late 1930s takes just such an approach (1947).

Harris points out that one does not leave one's environment to know, even when dealt with in the abstract (Harris, 2007, p1).

Both Harris and Marchand therefore stress that the process of making knowledge emerges through connections between people, things and environment. I follow this understanding in discussions here through attending to practices, discourses and the material world as components that help shape knowing in the village. Knowing as a fluid and an active process, constantly being made and re-made means it is hard to reify as an object (Dilley, 2010), i.e. a singular and static concept of 'knowledge'.[19] Following Dilley, I am not seeking a cognitively framed account of knowing but 'a phenomenologically informed account of social, cultural, political, and moral relations (rather than inner cognitive states)' (2010, pS190)- knowing is not merely a cognitive process but can be felt and practiced.[20] Harris sees this knowledge-making as a form of crafting, and it is this notion that I apply to my discussions of cosmological understandings. Understandings of the cosmos within the village, and of moral orders within these, do not come as whole, ready-to-be-applied concepts, but instead emerge from culturally and historically specific interactions.[21] These are themselves incorporated and framed by cosmological understandings and moral ordering and such a working and refining can be

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[19] There are various discussions in the literature as to whether the use of the noun 'knowledge' suggests too static a category with authors such as Harris (2007) and the contributors to his edited collection preferring instead to refer to 'knowing' and 'ways of knowing' rather than the more problematic term 'knowledge'. I here stick to the use of the noun, but stress its non-static qualities.

[20] As Harris (2007) suggests, not all experiences become part of knowledge and not all knowledge becomes articulated into understandings of theories of that certainty. Furthermore not all knowledge is necessarily articulated through language. Knowledge about the spiritual is perhaps particularly not limited to language and some of my interlocutors responded to my questions about how they knew God was with them, or communicating with them by saying they felt it or they just 'knew'. Again, through seeing knowledge as an ongoing crafting co-created by people, things and the environment, the focus on the internal cognitive processes of a person is shifted into a co-construction through differing encounters.

[21] Which in this context include such diverse elements as the historical and cultural background of Trinidad and the local area, the growth of evangelical and Pentecostal forms of Christianity in Trinidad, the wider Caribbean and beyond, local, national and international political and socio-economic situations, the Japanese tsunami; the discovery of oil in Trinidadian territory, a new pastor at a local church and cases of sickness within the family.

seen as a form of crafting: an ongoing and respectful process that creates and sustains particular understandings through which the world is framed.

Which crafting and knowledge is seen as valid is shaped by social organization and performance (Barth, 2002; Latour and Woolgar, 1979), and is therefore part of the situatedness of knowledge. Furthermore, not all members of the community follow the same cosmological understandings, in the village some differences were notable depending on age, level of education, church denomination and family and personal backgrounds. Rather then, these knowledge assemblages represent collections of similar ideas and broad conceptualizations held by many people- assemblages are individually crafted as well as worked on at a wider community level. Cosmological understandings, including concepts of moral order might therefore be framed as what Irwin and Michael term ‘ethno-epistemic assemblages’ (2003)- locally situated knowledge, made up of differing elements that more or less ‘hang’ together as part of the same group and which can be drawn on as the basis for other understandings. Crucially these also alter and develop, both for individuals and for communities, being made and re-made through wayfaring over time and through refinements and changes to component parts. Such descriptions presented therefore reflect the particular situatedness of my experiences in the field and the contemporary period in which my interlocutors and I were located.

Ingold’s understanding of knowing as developing through pathways (2010) is perhaps particularly useful for thinking about the West Indian context. The many cultural influences and backgrounds of those who came and stayed in the West Indies, as well as the wider power structures and influences from outside the area, have been integrated to a greater and lesser extent in everyday life and remain an intrinsic part of notions of Caribbean-ness. The drawing together (and keeping separate) of the many component elements that make up the history of the islands mean that Caribbean culture is at the same time both multiple and whole- composed of more than one and less than two (Strathern, 2004). This fieldwork is focused on one village which is at the same time made up of connections with, and relations to, other areas of Trinidad and beyond its borders. While it can no longer be conceptualized as an isolated and clearly defined location as Herskovits and Herskovits (1947) presented it in 1939, Matei Candea suggests the virtue of the bounded fieldsite held together for the purpose of analysis, is ‘not as an object to be explained, but a contingent window into complexity’ (Candea, 2007). In the remaining section of this chapter I briefly focus on the village fieldsite, its complexities, and my fieldwork methods before moving on to the more detailed description and analysis in the upcoming chapters.

The field

Trinidad is a Caribbean island located seven miles from the coast of Venezuela. One of the two islands that form the nation of Trinidad and Tobago, its history of slavery and indentured labour is similar to that of many other Caribbean countries. Trinidad was originally colonized by the Spanish after being claimed for Spain by Columbus in 1498, and French planters brought their African slaves to work on the island from 1793 (Brereton, 2009). Trinidad was captured by the British in 1797, slavery was abolished in 1834 and shortly afterwards, from 1845, indentured labourers were brought over from India to work on the plantations. Other indentured populations, including those from China and from Madeira, also migrated to Trinidad throughout the nineteenth century, albeit in smaller numbers (Brereton, *ibid*). Trinidad gained independence from the British in 1962. The ethnic and religious make-up of Trinidad reflects its history- at the time of my stay just under 32% of the population were Afro-Trinidadian and were largely the descendents of African slaves (and who were mainly Christian), while just over 37% of the population were Indo-Trinidadian, largely the descendents of the indentured labourers from India and who were mostly Hindu but with substantial groups who were Muslim and Christian (Central Statistical Office of Trinidad and Tobago, 2012; Brereton, *ibid*). The rest of the population was recorded as a mix of ethnic backgrounds, the largest groups being Caucasian and Chinese (Central Statistical Office of Trinidad and Tobago, *ibid*). Littlewood notes that Trinidad might be seen as one of the first 'modern' societies, slavery creating a new model of human relations based on people as commodities (2007). He suggests that the 'reconstituted peasantries' which Mintz (1974, 1986) saw as forming in Caribbean societies following the end of slavery did not significantly alter the value placed on the principles of universalism, Christianity and the wider world economy that were marked onto Trinidad through the slave trade and colonial rule (Littlewood, 2007).

Slocum and Thomas suggest that the Caribbean as an area can be understood as heterogeneous but a place which is drawn together by historical, economic and socio-cultural patterns including colonialism, kinship structure and religion (2003). They cite Mintz's proposition that specific social characteristics unify the area, rather than one particular culture (Mintz, 1971 cited in Slocum and Thomas, 2003) and they chart the changes in the central topic of ethnographic research conducted within the Caribbean- from a focus on village life, religion, music and dance in the 1920s and '30s, on families and kinship in the 1940s-70s, to decolonialization and power struggles, including nationalism, national identity and independence from the 1960s to the date of their review (Slocum and Thomas, 2003). Yelvington suggests that much of the anthropology of the Caribbean (and Afro-Latin America) has been influenced by debates on New World black culture.[22] These reiterate the importance of the colonial history of the Caribbean, an aspect that Troillet reminds us is largely responsible for the heterogeneity of the region (1992, also evident in relation to Trinidad in Brereton, 2009).

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[22] These are chiefly around Herskovits' idea of the transportation and continuity of African cultural tradition to the New World versus Frazier's notion of cultural creation in the context of the deprivation and discrimination experienced by individuals of African descent in the New World (Yelvington, 2001). Herskovits saw a culture that had 'survived' slavery, while Frazier saw a people being 'stripped of its social heritage' (Frazier, 1939 cited in Yelvington, 2001, p.229). It has also been suggested that the annihilation of the indigenous populations of Arawaks and Caribs have also left the Caribbean with no 'native' voice, as Troillet states: 'This is a region where Pentecostalism is as "indigenous" as Rastafarianism, where some "Bush Negroes" were Christian long before Texans became "American", where some "East Indians" find peace in "African" rituals of Shango' (Trouillot, 1992, p.24).

Unsurprisingly therefore, Trinidad has both similarities and differences to its Caribbean neighbours. Trinidadian traditions such as Carnival (and to some extent, calypso) are present in other areas of the Caribbean, albeit in slightly different forms[23] and Trinidad also shares other elements of similarity to other Caribbean nations, Wilson's notions of 'crab antics' and respectability versus reputation being cited as being common to many of these cultures (Wilson, 1995 [1973]; Miller, 1994; Littlewood, 1993, and see Chapter 2 for a more in-depth examination of Wilson's conceptualizations). However Trinidad also differs from other Caribbean cultures, its oil industry making it comparatively better off than many other Caribbean states which are more dependent on tourism for income (see for example Guadaloupe's work in Saaint Martin, 2009) and Trinidad's ethnic make-up is also more unusual for the Caribbean, given the percentage mix of those of Indo-Trinidadian and Afro-Trinidadian descent. While authors such as Miller state that ethnicity also seemed to be somewhat a preoccupation of Trinidadians themselves, Miller found that ideas of cultural background could be very contradictory and in fact groups were far more merged than often portrayed (1994).[24]

Trinidadian politics have historically been divided along ethnic lines, with a party that was seen by many within Trinidad to represent the interests of Afro-Trinidadians (the People's National Movement or PNM) against a party that was seen as representing the interests of the Indo-Trinidadian population (the United National Congress or UNC). Since Independence the PNM have mainly been in power in Trinidad, however during my stay, a coalition government with the UNC as the main party had been elected (in 2010) for only the second time in the nation's history. The village and area around the village had been a PNM

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[23] Carnival in Antigua is a summer festival for example (Hughes-Tafen, 2006).

[24] As well as a heavy focus on ethnicity and identity, anthropologists have examined Trinidadian cultural traditions and festivities such as carnival (Miller, 1991; Scher, 2002) and calypso (Warner, 1982). Health and healing, particularly in relation to religion have also been looked at in relation to folk medicine and Shango (Simpson, 1960, 1962; Mischel, 1957, 1959) and mental illness and the religious cult around 'Mother Earth' (Littlewood, 1993).

stronghold but due to changes in the boundaries of the electoral ward, the Member of Parliament for this area was no longer PNM. As well as feeling that Trinidad's government were now no longer working in the interest of Afro-Trinidadians and Afro-Trinidadian areas, people in the village also told me how they felt their area was being punished by the new government for previously supporting the PNM. This was evident for example in the perception that the cuts made to the government employment scheme were primarily in PNM-supporting villages.

While there was little violent crime in the village and its immediate surroundings, the prevalence of this in the rest of Trinidad was felt on a local level. At the time of my fieldwork Trinidad was suffering high rates of crime and violence with 35.2 homicides per 100,000 people reported in 2010 compared to a global average of 6.9 per 100,000 (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2011). Many of my interlocutors were wary when travelling outside of the village, particularly if they were heading towards more notoriously dangerous areas, and they expressed a low trust in police, government and justice systems. Following a surge in murders, in August 2011 the Trinidad and Tobago government announced a State of Emergency (SoE, Trinidad and Tobago Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2011). This continued until December 2011, during which time a number of urban areas with the greatest crime problems were under curfew. Due to the prevalence of the drug trade along the northeast coast (both in transporting cocaine from South to North America and locally grown weed), the local area, including the village, was also placed under curfew during this time. Responsibility for these problems was attributed to various aspects of contemporary life including the current Trinidadian government (and previous governments to a greater or lesser extent), the individuals personally involved and a general uncaring attitude within Trinidad. However the ultimate reasons for such social problems were seen to be due to external agents- caused by the Devil and the evil spirits who worked for him.

The main site for my research was a fishing village on the northeast coast of Trinidad, where I lived and undertook participant observation between April 2011-May 2012, following three months of initial fieldwork in and around Trinidad's capital city, Port of Spain. The Trinidad and Tobago census places less than 2000 people in the village (Central Statistical Office of Trinidad and Tobago, 2012) and the majority of the people I met were born in the village, or in the villages around it. The vast majority of residents were also of Afro-Trinidadian descent and were Christian by religious background.[25] These characteristics were thus in contradiction to the perception of the ruling government parties in Trinidad at that time. The coalition government were viewed by those in the village to be mostly Indo-Trinidadian, Hindu, well-off and based in and more concerned with, the more urban areas of Trinidad. As in many of the poorer areas of Trinidad, many people in the village, such as Tina, were reliant on government employment schemes for work. There were a number of churches of different denominations based in the village itself (Anglican, Seventh Day Adventist, Evangelical, Spiritual Baptist and Independent Baptist) and community members also attended the Catholic and Pentecostal churches in nearby villages. [26]

The Trinidad census 2012 notes that the number of those affiliated with the Pentecostal, Evangelical and Full Gospel churches has more than doubled between 2000 and 2011 across Trinidad, and also that there has a been increase in attendance in the older fundamentalist churches such as Seventh Day Adventists and Jehovah Witness churches (Central Statistical Office of Trinidad and Tobago, 2012). While is hard to establish exact figures on a local level, this was also reported to have occurred in the villages along the coast by older members of the village.[27] In this work I broadly group together the Seventh

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[25] For more details on demgraphic details of the village see Appendix I for a summary of the household survey I conducted.

[26] See Appendix II for more detail on each of these denominations in the village.

[27] See Appendix I for further details on church affiliation in the village from my household survey.

Day Adventist, Evangelical and Pentecostal churches that were attended by those in the community as 'evangelical'[28] churches, the other churches in the village not having quite the same emphasis. Although in the past there were people from the village who followed Orisha,[29] there was only one person known to do so while I was in the field and he was on the periphery of village life. There were now no Orisha events held in the community, although Lum's work (2000) and other people in the village suggested to me that there had been a group based nearby at one time. As will become clear in the upcoming chapters, relationships between the churches were not clear-cut, individuals having family members and friends attached to different churches where they attended services, people changing affiliation through their lifetime as well as some who attended more that one church on a regular basis. Denominational differences were not always clear therefore, although on occasions these were extremely important.

The local area was one of the poorest in Trinidad but was far more cut off than many other areas, accessible only by a single, long and twisting road, much of which was in extremely bad condition. The area used to be a thriving centre during the British colonial period where it grew much of the nutmeg, citrus and cloves produced in Trinidad. Since the closure of the estates however, opportunities for local employment had waned, and many young people had moved into the capital, Port of Spain, and the East-West Corridor that leads from it to find work in Trinidad's main business and industrial zone. Like other country areas this coast, and the 'bush' that surrounded it, was often associated with backwardness and under-development by those in Port of Spain and the East-West Corridor.[30] It was also an area where outsiders might hope to find

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[28] In order to distinguish between them, when referring to the Evangelical church I use an upper case 'E' while to refer to the churches I have grouped together as 'evangelical' I use lower case.

[29] Orisha (also known as Shango) practices incorporate elements of West African (Yoruban) religion influenced by Catholicism. In other parts of Trindad Orisha links also to the Spiritual Baptist faith, however many locally practicing Spiritual Baptists rejected this connection. For more details, including the history and contemporary positioning of Orisha in Trinidad, see Henry (2003).

[30] See Appendix III for a closer examination of the term 'bush' and its use in Trinidad.

obeahmen/women,[31] who could remove some forms of spiritual affliction, provide a talisman that may help an individual win a court case or stop their partner 'horning' (cheating on) them, even 'putting something on' someone to harm them.

As well as the churches, the village had a police station, local court, an Anglican primary school and a Catholic primary school just beyond the village, a high school, radio station, community centre, playing field, internet café (with an intermittent connection), handicraft centre, a hardware shop, two bars and a small number of local shops and food places. There was also a fishing pier with a centre for the fisherman. This was where the fish was brought in, was weighed and sold, and where the fishermen mostly spent their time when not out at sea. As well as fishing, agriculture was another means through which people survived, some selling their produce at local shops or taking this into markets in the centre. Many people grew crops for themselves and to trade with others locally, more akin to peasant economies than capitalist modes of production. CEPEP, the government employment scheme, had previously employed many people locally after the estates had closed, and there was still a little work available through this. The pensions of older people in the village were often used to sustain members of the household, as was money and goods sent by relatives who had moved out of the area (for more details on

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[31] Fernández-Olmos and Paravisini-Gebert describe *obeah* as 'hybrid' or 'creolized' beliefs '…dependent on ritual invocation, fetishes and charms' (Fernández-Olmos and Paravisini-Gebert, 2011, p155). *Obeah* particularly refers to African-derived activities with religious elements (Fernández-Olmos and Paravisini-Gebert, 2011), and both Fernández-Olmos and Paravisini-Gebert and Laitenen (2012) stress that this term is used to refer to a range of practices and beliefs (see both of their books for more detail of the history of *obeah*). *Obeah* practices present in the local area as well as in much of the rest of Trinidad have been viewed in the literature as either a religion, as witchcraft or as occult practices, with authors arguing about the politics of legitimization in relation to these labels and the resulting consequences of their use (Paton and Forde, 2012; Lynch, 2014). Such categorizations are unhelpful in the Caribbean context as in practice people mix *obeah* work with Catholic and other more denominationally-linked actions, and, probably due in part to the many different churches in the Caribbean, also mix practices linked to one church with practices from another. Such a pragmatic approach to spiritual and other practices is found in many ethnographies of the Caribbean where different religious denominations and practices co-exist (e.g. Brodwin, 1996; Guadaloupe, 2009; Paton and Forde, 2012) and cultural backgrounds are drawn together in individual actions and notions of national identity (e.g. Guadaloupe, 2009; Khan, 2004). In the local area, the term *obeah* was used to refer to practices that were seen as witchcraft or devilish.

employment, family structure and relationships between the old and young, and with the rest of Trinidad, see Chapter 2).

Whilst in the field I lived with a local family and helped out with their business ventures as well as visiting schools, businesses, charitable organizations and the village's community centre. I regularly attended church services, attending at least two services at all of the local churches during my stay but spending the majority of my time between the churches with the greatest number of people attending; the Catholic, Seventh Day Adventist and Pentecostal churches. I participated in social and church events, associations such as cooperative meetings, church social gatherings and handicraft clubs, as well as attending particular national events with people from the village (including Spiritual Baptist Liberation Day celebrations). I interviewed members of all the different churches in the area, community leaders and those involved in particular activities across the village, and there were a smaller number of individuals, and friendship groups (including those based on locality, workplace and church) that I would visit and hold conversations with on a more regular basis throughout my stay.

People in the village were familiar with students who came from the University of the West Indies (UWI) staying and conducting studies in the village, so with my links to the university it was perhaps inevitable that my position would be as a 'student' during my visit. I stayed with a family who had previously put up students- unlike many people locally, having the space and facilities to do so- and my being childless and unmarried also probably contributed to this framing. People were generally sympathetic with my student position and took time to explain things to me, as I was there to learn. At the same time, I was also different to other students who had come to the area- I stayed and got involved with local social events, churches and would regularly meet and engage with people, which appeared to be different to previous students in the village. I was also white and also not Trinidadian, again different to previous students but something which I was told would mean that people would think I knew what I was doing and would take my work more seriously. People were surprised at my age, and that I was not married and did not have children being so old, but my position as student somewhat compensated for this- through conversations it emerged that some people had assumed that I had either forsaken these things in order to study (as one person told me, I was a 'geek') or that I would do these things after I finished my studies.[32]

As unmarried, childless and as a student I was referred to as 'girl' (and 'sister' by those who knew me from different churches)- young and naïve. This positioning made it easier to ask questions and to make mistakes, but also to visit people, particularly in their homes alone. People regularly suggested other local people who would be helpful for me to speak to, telling me where I would find them or how to contact them. I was extremely grateful for these suggestions and almost always took these up. Those I became closest to in the village (with a couple of exceptions) were generally women, and it was hardest to speak to younger men (although I did also manage this, but less regularly). People locally got used to seeing me about and would call out to me as I walked by- sometimes surprised to see who I was talking to or where I was. Generally I had no problems with people understanding that I was in the village to undertake research for my studies, which I glossed as looking at life in the village and particularly the cross-over between religion and medicine,[33] learning that more detail that this usually did not interest people.

As is always the way, my position, and who I am, no doubt affected the data I was able to gather and my interpretation of this. Cultural gender differences in the area meant that women tended to be more associated with churches, and

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[32] Although there was some initial speculation as to whether, as part of my visit, I was also looking for a Trinidadian boyfriend. However the length of time I spent in the village and in churches, evidently not looking for a Trinidadian boyfriend, appeared to dissipate these rumours over the months I was there.

[33] However people largely assumed that my 'work' was when I talked to people, and although I was interested in attending different events, including the church services, these were not 'work'. I would continually remind people that I attended services at every church and that I was gathering useful information by being involved and attending these events, much to the amusement of the family I stayed with who had heard me repeat this many times and were fully aware of the many churches and events I regularly attended and of the detailed notes I continually took.

less with visiting bars or *liming* on the street. It was far easier for me to meet people through churches, and to be involved in these and social groups aimed more at women (such as craft clubs), and so perhaps my focus on the role of churches was somewhat inevitable. However, given that churches were the main meeting space, and the evangelical Christian discourse was so strong and apparent in everyday life, it is hard to understand how I could have visited the area without examining the role this had for people. It is also interesting to note the difference in my position compared to Herskovits and Herskovits (1947) and Littlewood (1993), who have both undertaken and written ethnographies on the area. Not only were we in similar spaces at very different time points but the Herskovits' were a married couple, linked to the colonial state and stayed for a few months, Littlewood was a doctor, with a family who remained in Port of Spain, who stayed for well over a year and who lived with a religious group in the bush. As such they were perhaps positioned in a less junior position to me, and were likely to have been viewed very differently within the area than I was.

Selecting Trinidad as a field site came from my interest in how people dealt with anxiety in everyday life outside places where anxiety was medicalized as a mental health problem. Undertaking research in a place which had low levels of levels of clinical anxiety, but much reason for anxiety in everyday life- through for example a high perceived risk of crime and violence and perceptions of corruption in the State- seemed like a useful place to start. I initially based myself in the capital, the focus for much of social, cultural, political and economic life in Trinidad. I started to explore the areas around the city, included the East-West Corridor which lead from this, and was where many people moved to from across the country to find work. In such places however, people often travelled long distances in and out of work, by maxi-taxis and in cars, and then to meet friends and to attend events, and it was difficult to just walk around places or to meet people. These areas also appeared so central and different to elsewhere in Trinidad which were classified as more 'Indo-Trinidadian' or 'Afro-Trinidadian', quite separate places and were where people practiced *obeah*, and were more 'traditional'. Having myself grown up in a rural English village (also on the coast) and then having lived in London, I was familiar with ideas of 'peripheral' places and people by those who lived in more central areas. I was also familiar with village life, life by the sea and the idea of being somewhere that was easy for me to navigate without a car (and with significantly less risk of crime) also appealed. The notion of people practicing *obeah* was also intriguing, and so I left the centre to find out about life more on the periphery (which was not actually that distant geographically), something that I thought might also mean that manifestations of anxiety were different and provide a nice comparison study to the research I was conducting in and around Port of Spain.

I was somewhat disappointed to find that evangelical Christianity was far more dominant than any kind of *obeah* use, or work with spirits. And yet this itself was far more interesting- why was evangelical Christianity so appealing when other kinds of spirit work were not? How did a village of such a small size come to have eight churches situated within and around it? Who could possibly be going to these and how did they relate to each other? Being the granddaughter of a Methodist minister and having been brought up by Quaker parents, I was probable also drawn to investigating how different Christian denominations and perspectives co-existed in this space, especially when evangelical Christian voices (so different to Quaker understandings of the world) were so dominant. I was still interested in anxiety, health and the body, and in cultural understandings and wider framings of these, but my sympathy with a particular marginal socio-political positioning, and my intrigue into church relations and changing dominant cosmological frameworks, meant that I abandoned the idea of continuing a comparative project and I decided to focus on everyday life in the village.

In locating my research in this area, I was aware that I would be a third anthropologist producing work around these villages, working at a third point in time and a third period in Trinidad's history. This allowed me to consider changes in the area in perhaps a unique way, while still acknowledging the differences between how such accounts were developed and who produced these. This also brings to attention that my work was undertaken and thus positioned at a particular time point, and I use the ethnographic past throughout this work to also indicate the time-specific nature of my findings and analysis. In writing I have also had to tackle how to represent the area and those I spoke to. I have not used the names of any of the local villages, and have changed the names of people I have presented in the text. I have taken steps to make people not identifiable and have tried to present people in a fair way that I hope they would feel satisfied with.

This work is divided into two parts; the first part gives broader background and description to the field site and cosmological understandings within this, moving in the second part to a closer examination, analysis and discussion of understandings of the body, health and illness and misfortune. In the upcoming chapters I therefore start by outlining the fieldwork context in more detail: the relations and institutions within and beyond the village, the broad cosmological framings by the community and how such understandings were presented, discussed and disputed.

I then move on to examine concepts of illness, health and the body, the role of spirits and the spiritual in these, and how illnesses were treated. I then move from more conceptual understandings of the individual body to a view of the body at the material level, and then how community members apply similar concepts about their own bodies to Trinidad as a nation, the body of the state. While there were therefore different levels of bodies; the metaphorical body at the state level, the conceptualized body at the individual level and the material body at the physiological level, notions of the body at each level were linked by concepts of morality and maintenance. Moral and maintained bodies, or bodies that lacked this, constructed two sorts of body that crossed these levels- bodies that were healthy and Christian, and bodies that were open to the working of evil spirits. Cosmological understandings, including a moral order, are therefore both crafted and embodied through the practices and discourses of individuals in the community (also impacting on the materiality of their bodies), and through interpretation of practices and events that take place more broadly. Understandings are situated within their wider contemporary context and I discuss how such cosmological ideas position individuals and events and give a sense of control and order in an otherwise disordered world. I conclude by drawing together these different bodies to examine how wider concepts of evil and morality emerge and can be drawn on to interpret and apply order to current circumstances, and to consider why particular cosmological frames are particularly meaningful in this context. The ethno-epistemic assemblages presented are therefore specific and contingent, embedded within other elements, as Navaro-Yashin notes

> …The relation which people forge with objects must be studied in historical contingency and political specificity. If persons and objects are assembled in a certain manner, I would argue that this is not because they are always, already, or anyway would do so. Rather ‘assemblages’ of subjects and objects must be read as specific in their politics and history (Navaro-Yashin, 2009, p9).

Part I - Village, spirits and moral order

2. Trinidad village

One January morning I walked through the village, along the side of the roads and down gravel tracks, to a group of houses built so close to each other it was hard to see them all. I looked for the brightly painted blue brick house as directed, and followed the small path through the grass towards it. This was the house of a church elder and I was here to speak to his daughter, Rachel. I had arranged to meet Rachel after previously speaking to a friend of hers- a friend who also turned out to be her cousin, and it became apparent as we spoke that there were a number of people I knew in the village to whom Rachel was also related. Despite having already been in the village for around nine months at this point, and having met lots of the other members of this family, I had not yet met Rachel and through our conversations it emerged that this was because Rachel was often outside the village.

Rachel was in her early twenties and had recently finished training as a primary school teacher. She was still waiting for her completion certificate from this training, a certificate that sometimes never arrived in Trinidad. Since her training had finished at the end of the last school year she had been unable to find work, in teaching or any other field. This was a situation many other young people in the village also found themselves in, including many of Rachel's friends. A lack of local employment was something that the mostly retired older people, or 'older heads', in the village were less affected by, and just one of many differences between young and old. Rachel told me that younger people in the village mostly respected the 'older heads', but this depended to some extent on the visible actions of the older members of the community- 'those who are in church and stand for certain things they [younger people] will listen to more, those [older people] in rum shop…some older people drink, curse and party with young people so young people don'[t] have respect for them because they doing what they are' [acting like young people]. This lack of employment was a real difficulty for the village youth however, and an inability to find work was not for lack of trying. Due to a frustrating lack of any jobs in the local area, Rachel had applied elsewhere in Trinidad- in order to work, she had to leave the area where her large extended family was chiefly based. More than this however, Rachel felt that she had to hide that she lived in the village in order to get any work. She told me that putting the name of the village on her resume meant that ‘they [employers] think you want to leave early and will get in late, [you] may have qualification but [you] can’[t] get job’. Rachel therefore used the address of a family member who lived in the Port of Spain area.

Like many other people locally, Rachel had little respect for the government, especially since the cutting of local government employment schemes. She viewed the government as ‘taking money and not doing anything for people at all, jus’ taking money…[and in relation to local employment cuts] they taking bread out of they mouth’. She was also hurt by the attitude of people from outside the area towards the village and its environs, particularly those in the Port of Spain area and East-West Corridor: ‘people say it too far, lot of people don’t come up’. They described the area as ‘less develop’ and ‘behind God’s back- God turn his back on [the village], don’t care what goes on here’. She told me that people from these areas viewed her as a ‘country bookie’, someone who ‘don’t know nothing’ and people had asked her if they had telephones, newspapers and shops in the area: ‘It just further out, we not backwards…[these people were] stuck up, they think they better…we eating better food here, not fast food, we don’[t] have pollution’. While most young people left or sought work outside the area, some were able to find work of a particular kind nearby. For young men in particular growing marijuana was ‘easy money’. The presence of the local drug trade also formed some of the background to my time in the field, and, as mentioned earlier, the village was one of the few non-urban areas to be placed under curfew during the State of Emergency for this reason. Law enforcement services struggled to control crime and violence within the local area as well as the nation.

My conversation with Rachel was fairly typical of speaking to younger people in the area- lack of work, limited activities locally and little respect for government as well as differences to the ‘older heads’ were all key issues raised by this group. Like broader discussions with those in the village however, a distinction between a ‘them’ and an ‘us’ also emerged through Rachel’s account of everyday life, as did implied notions of fairness, respect and morality. Those from the village were unfairly treated by those from outside, they *should* be able to work in the community, young men *should not* work in the drug trade, older people *should* be respected by the young but *should* behave as older people and *should not* try to be young. For Rachel, as for other people locally, there were many things that *should* occur that did not, and things that *were* occurring that should not- there was a moral order, a way of living, that was not taking place. For many people this current state could be contrasted to a past when a moral order was present.

This vignette, and the issues it raises, highlights key tensions which both impacted on, and demarcated my fieldsite. Before embarking on more detailed discussions of cosmological understandings within the village therefore, this chapter further contextualizes and situates my fieldsite through particularly important tensions: relationships between the local churches, changes over time, and how the village and local area were defined and positioned in relation to other parts of Trinidad and beyond. Through these three foci, discussions around age, gender and problems of morality and justice also emerge, all of which form, inform and are a background to cosmological understandings and moral ordering. Underlying these key areas are conceptual definitions and boundaries between self and other; ‘us’ and ‘them’ (even ‘then’ and ‘now’). It was these balanced tensions and situated juxtapositions which defined the relationships and relations both within the fieldsite and between the fieldsite and elsewhere. These created mutable and stable (rather than fixed), boundaries to the fieldsite and therefore to the focus of my work. As merely ‘held’ together rather than concrete positionings, these could collapse and the edges be re-drawn depending on the pressure or focus applied to these. However the site was broadly held with enough tension for it to make sense to term understandings, experiences, practices and discourses as ‘local’, or as constituting part of ‘the village’ in my discussions. These boundaries therefore conceptually relate to a sense of place rather than necessarily following geographical boundaries around the village.[1]

‘Us’ and ‘them’ within the village: relationships between churches

As mentioned earlier, eight churches were situated in and around this village of less than 2000 inhabitants, the churches attracting most numbers of attendees being the Catholic, Pentecostal and Seventh Day Adventist churches. While the area was previously largely Catholic, numbers in this church were now dropping, although it was the other long-standing and established denomination- the Anglican church- whom I was told had seen the greatest drop in those attending. Spiritual Baptist churches had had a strong presence in the local area historically, however this was waning and while there were a number of Spiritual Baptist churches along the coast, some were connected within the same broad diocese of churches while others were not.[2] Perhaps because of such divisions there was not a cohesive set of doxa and praxis that ran between these and they could not clearly be grouped as one singular church approach. Local divisions meant that some Spiritual Baptist churches were better attended than others and, as was the case for many of the other churches, there were many who would state that they were of a particular denomination but did not regularly attend church.

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[1] I have chosen not to give a pseudonym to my fieldsite location so as not to imply that the fieldsite is defined solely geographically but rather to acknowledge the village as a location held together by tensions and through categorizations of the other. This also follows Ginsburg and Rapp in how we might think of the local: ‘the local is not defined by geographical boundaries but is understood as any small-scale arena in which social meanings are informed and adjusted’ (1995, p.8).

[2] These divisions within the Spiritual Baptist church can also be seen at a larger level within Trinidad, for example a newspaper article dated Friday 13th April 2012 records the government opposition leader, Dr. Keith Rowley as calling for the Spiritual Baptist community to have ‘singularity of leadership’ as Muslim, Hindu, Anglican and Catholic communities do. Within these communities he states, ‘…we know who we have to speak to. Unfortunately it is not so with Spiritual Baptists’ (Daily Express, 2012, p19).

As can be imagined when there are many churches in the same area, there were links between all of these in the community, and members of the same family attended different churches, community members changed their affiliation through their lifetime, and some attended more than one church on a regular basis. Differences between these churches were not as great as they might appear; neighbours attended events at each other's churches, there were village 'churches together' programmes, and a prayer and exorcism group was participated in by members of both the Seventh Day Adventist and Pentecostal churches. In addition, across the churches there was an understanding that the morality of the individual was demonstrated through what was considered 'good Christian behaviour' which could be broadly understood as refraining from drinking or smoking excessively, blaspheming and sexual relations outside marriage (preferably) or long-term partnership, looking after family and not cheating or stealing from others. An individual's personal morality was therefore viewed as more important than an individual's church affiliation.

While many ethnographies of Christianity have focused on one denomination (e.g. Csordas, 1997; Lester, 2005; Robbins 2004a), there are others that have considered contexts where multiple churches are present, especially within the Caribbean (e.g. Meyer in Ghana, 1999; Guadaloupe in Saaint Martin, 2009; Brodwin in Haiti, 1996). While the next chapter considers shared cosmological understandings present across local churches, it is worth noting here that like Meyer's work in Ghana these churches differed largely in praxis rather than doctrine (1999). In Meyer's 1999 book on religion among the Ewe, she suggests that Evangelical Presbyterian Church services brought together individuals from various denominations: Catholics, Methodists, Presbyterians as well as a number of African Independent and Pentecostal churches. These were all able to unite in relation to the same enemy, the Devil. The Devil as a common enemy was also found across churches locally, and I will go on to argue that it was the practices and discourses of those churches I have grouped together as 'evangelical'- the Pentecostal, Seventh Day Adventist and Evangelical churches- that grew in appeal as individuals sought more effective means through which to deal with this malevolent threat.

Despite the connections between these churches, many of the services in the different denominations stressed the privileged position of those affiliated with *that* church- the advantages to being attached to God's 'true' church as opposed to other churches in the area. As with many exceptions to my wider argument, this was less so for the Catholic church. This long-established church with long-established and structured services and practices was attended by those who were generally more highly educated and in more professional roles locally (such as school teachers), and were often those who had more comfortable and less precarious lifestyles than those who 'hustled' for a living. While the Catholic sermons and discussions I had with the nun running the Catholic churches in the local villages[3] addressed similar themes and concerns to those I found in the other churches, there were significant differences. Practices such as the novena were particular to the Catholic church and Catholic services were set and remained consistent with others across Trinidad and the wider Caribbean. The Catholic News, a paper distributed by the Trinidadian Catholic church, was often referred to and used as a guide in services and brought news of Catholic concerns from the whole of Trinidad to the local area, as well as linking the area to the rest of Trinidad. The Catholic church was therefore seen as different to other churches locally, not only in terms of their non-Protestant and established/structured praxis but also as being linked to *obeah* practices and to accusations of devil-worship. These were not talked about generally in the village but could come up in conversations within other church groups when Catholics were not present.[4] In a number of conversations with people about *obeah* it was clear that *obeah* and the Catholic church were seen as being able to co-exist together in a way which was not the case for Protestant and more evangelical churches. Rituals within the Catholic church, and understandings of the function of these, were described in a similar way to *obeah* for example and could involve manipulation of objects and saying

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[3] Due to a shortage of priests there was not a priest assigned to the local area.

[4] In introducing me to the suggestion that Catholics worshipped the Devil (although they did not necessarily realize they did so) one of my Seventh Day Adventist interlocutors directed me to particular references in the Bible which she saw as illustrating this.

set words- usually called ‘prayers’ even if non-Catholics could describe these as ‘incantations’. However in my conversations with Catholics, especially those who had less secure and professional jobs and education, many of the same general understandings about the world were described as I heard in other churches- including the increased presence of the Devil on the earth and his role in causing natural disasters, economic recession and crime. Like others in the village, Catholics rubbed along with non-Catholics, sometimes divisions were clear while other times these were less so.

In the more evangelical churches there was a distinction made between those who were ‘born’ or ‘saved’ and therefore destined for heaven, while others (at least in theory) were destined for hell. The form this hell would take could be discussed in depth and with some relish, both in churches and by individuals in private, and could involve vivid descriptions of the non-saved drowning in rivers of their own blood. However these ‘others’ destined for damnation were also members of the local community- friends and neighbours, as well as people in the individual’s family. While there was such rhetoric from within churches, and attempts to missionize friends and neighbours, these distinctions were not necessarily lived in practice. For example, the head teacher of the high school in the village was very active in the Pentecostal church, and in the local community. His good moral behaviour, as well as his religious devotion meant that he was viewed as having a good deal of what I have termed ‘spiritual strength’ (see Chapter 3), individuals at the Seventh Day Adventist church telling me that clearly he was such a good man that he was heading for a place on Jesus’ side. Even though he wasn’t an Adventist, I asked? Of course, was their response- his actions demonstrated that he would surely be saved and therefore he would obviously convert to being an Adventist before the End of Days. There was therefore no need to try to convert him to the Adventist church now, it would surely occur at some point in the future anyway and so he, and some other members of the Pentecostal church, were not the focus of attempts at missionizing locally. The local pastor of the Independent Baptist church was also seen to have a large degree of spiritual strength and a close relationship to

God. The only person I heard talked about favourably by every person I met in the village (quite a feat), he was unassuming and lived modestly, working to help others in the local community. Both individuals were seen as morally 'good' as well as spiritually strong, such strength coming from individual relationships built up with God over a number of years and reinforced by the good Christian lifestyle they demonstrated in village life. This lifestyle included caring for and looking after their families and others in the local community, and they also did not engage in the drinking, gambling, apparent sexual encounters and *liming* (roughly understood as 'hanging around', often by the roadside and in bars) that many other local men participated in. While constructed ideas of spiritual strength were not routinely applied to all, this was one of a number of broad notions articulated by individuals from across the local churches, individuals being viewed as more or less spiritual and more or less close to God whichever church they were affiliated to.

Given the limited apparent differences between churches in terms of cosmology, I asked why individuals might then choose to attend one church over another. I was given examples of people who had argued with other members of the congregation or with pastors, who joined a church as friends or family attended this, those who had fallen in love (or wanted to bed) a member of a particular church, as well as those who detailed their movement between churches until they found one that appeared 'right' for them. Some individuals were occasionally asked to leave or were harshly reprimanded for their behaviour leading them to leave, as in the case of a young woman at the Seventh Day Adventist church who became pregnant outside marriage. Overall churches were keen to recruit and add to their numbers, the number of those attending/on the books/actively engaged/living a good moral lifestyle cited as evidence of the success of one local church over another. There remained a sense of one church being superior to another, the all-important moral integrity of a church being reflected mostly by its local leader (the pastor), as well as its congregation. The individual bodies and actions of those attached to and heading a particular church thus reflected the health of the church body itself so that there was not only scrutiny of individual behaviour in relation to a person, but also by the church they attended.

Church affiliation was spoken about as a form of identity, a type of ‘club’ that one was involved in to a greater or lesser extent and in this way, church affiliation appeared similar to the lodges that Herskovits and Herskovits (1947) recorded as central to village life in their work in the same area in 1939. Herskovits and Herskovits differentiated between two forms of lodges: non-secret mutual aid groups and secret societies such as the Freemasons, the former bringing fellowship, connections and financial assistance, the latter bringing status, connections and influence. Neither form remained during my visit, although these lodges were often recalled- albeit with an exclusive focus on secret societies and tales of the nefarious spiritual activity (devil-worship) attached to these (Chapter 8 discusses understandings of these types of lodges in more detail). While this earlier anthropological fieldwork notes the lodges’ key role in caring for sick members, during my stay churches took on such a role. While Herskovits and Herskovits (1947) also recorded the high number of churches in the village during their stay (Catholic, Anglican, Baptist, Shouter or Spiritual Baptist, Moravian and Seventh Day Adventist- six churches in total), the specific identity and fellowship, connections and status ascribed to lodges in Herskovits and Herskovits’ work appeared more relevant to the churches themselves during my visit.

Herskovits and Herskovits viewed lodge affiliation, and to some extent church attendance, as forms of self-expression, which ‘give a sense of purpose to the life of the individual and stability to the culture of society’ (1947, p256). While this provides a more functionalist account of these activities, the stress on an individual self, and a sense of connection and identity that these implied are salient points. Notions of self, while individual, were defined and were characteristics ascribed in relation to differing others. On a local level, self might be connected to household, family and village (see Chapter 5), and when one sees oneself more broadly, lines might be drawn around being from a particular area, ethnic background or being Trinidadian. Church affiliation added another form of self categorization on a local level, and unlike many of other the more immutable categories, this affiliation was selected by individuals themselves and could involve participation (and identification) to a greater or lesser degree. Belonging to a particular church was also part of who a person was therefore, and people told me proudly of those who were thought of well in the village as ‘they go to my church’. As an outsider to the village but one who was resident for a good period of time, which church I went to was also used as a way of stressing how one church was better than another- I could have chosen any church to attend as an outsider to the village and yet I attended church X. While I took time to stress that I had attended every church and regularly attended a number of these as part of my research, this was not often acknowledged (it was certainly weird to go to so many churches so frequently- only myself and ‘the mad girl’ (see Chapter 6) doing so) and people would often remind me and others listening that they had seen me in their church and ask when I was coming back.

While there was a degree of diversity and competition between churches, they were often not markedly different. Cosmological understandings that cut across the denominations, such as spiritual strength, allowed not only movement of individuals between churches but placed churches, and individuals, in relationship to each other. They enabled churches to take on a role linked to identity and sense of self rather than an exclusive cosmological frame that excluded others such as friends, family and neighbours. This view of Christianity as related to identity and unrestricted to a particular, exclusive denominational approach is also found in Guadaloupe’s (2009) work on Christianity in the Caribbean (in Saaint Martin) where Christianity was a ‘metalanguage of inclusiveness’ and part of a local identity constructed in relation to others.[5] In the same way that one might move between differing medical systems for treating different ailments, Last (1981) suggesting that

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[5] This focus on the individual self, and a search for the ‘authentic self’ can also be found in Miller’s work on Trinidad (1994).

‘what works’ often being the most important criteria, individuals were able to move between churches depending on what worked for them spiritually and in terms of their relationship and identity to others. Cosmological understandings themselves (both religious and medical, these also often connected) were rarely fixed and tightly framed, but instead hung together in differing configurations with some elements shared while others differed, allowing differences between official church rhetoric and lived practice to be unproblematic. Such configurations were forms of broad understandings about the world and how it worked- complicated, messy but under a Christian God.

Crucially, therefore, membership of different churches did not ‘do’ much; one particular church did not determine economic relationships or societal interactions more or less than any other and the old boundaries of church membership were not so important. However it is this nothingness of difference between church affiliations that is particularly interesting, and that distinguishes this Caribbean context from the growth of particular Christian denominations elsewhere. This form of ‘no difference’ is characteristic of West Indian societies, the relationship between a focus on the individual and of overarching concepts that broach individual differences being also visible in the work of Danny Miller on Trinidad for example (1994). Similar relationships also existed between churches while Littlewood was in the field thirty years earlier- such a ‘nothingness’ between churches was not a new aspect of daily life. What was newer however were the more evangelical shared cosmological understandings that cut across the churches- the strong roles played by God and the Devil, good and evil, God in control, the Devil ever-present- which were not evident in Littlewood’s fieldwork in the 1980s, nor Herskovits and Herskovits’ work undertaken in the same area in 1939. I suggest that this new pan-denominational moralizing of the world and individual action within this relate to the contemporary circumstances that the village and much of the rest of Trinidad found itself in. Trinidad had high rates of crime and violence and a justice system that was perceived of as ineffectual and being without state control. Through such discussions, the contemporary situation within Trinidad was viewed as a battle between God and the Devil, good and evil. The individual focus on ones own behaviour and morality, and the development of a personal relationship with God was a means through which to situate and exert some form of control within these circumstances. This lack of faith in the state and enhanced individualism can also be linked with neoliberalism and modernity, both closely tied to Caribbean culture, which is itself able to be viewed as the birthplace of modernity (Miller, 1994). Rather than focus on membership of a particular church within the village, I therefore focus on the shared cosmological understandings found across the churches- the ways of knowing about how the world 'works' that situated individuals locally in relation to a wider, moralized world.

Before moving on to discuss in more detail age differences, changes over time, and how the village was situated in relation to other places, I want to briefly discuss gender differences within the churches which also link to issues of gender more broadly in the village. Much has been written on gender in the Caribbean, see for example Momsen, 1993; Olwig, 2012; Smith, 1996; and of course the classic Jamaican ethnography, Clarke, 1975 [1957]. Indeed Troillet (1992) suggests that the study of kinship in the Caribbean has always been essentially gender-studies based, an interest he attributes in part to the preoccupation of officials who viewed the lack of a nuclear family model within Afro-Caribbean families as a form of deviancy. Many of the gender differences discussed in such works are also visible in Trinidad. As Littlewood (1993) also discusses, many couples were 'living' together without being married (marriage being something that was aspired to and could bring respectability), and men recognized and (in principle) contributed to the care of the children they fathered even if they did not remain with the mother. Austin-Broos (1997) noted in her work on Pentecostal churches in Jamaica that these were mostly attended by women and headed by male pastors, the figure of Jesus standing in for absent and untrustworthy husbands and boyfriends. In my fieldsite also, the churches were filled more with women than with men and it was men who took leadership and senior roles in the vast majority of the churches. The understanding of men as being leaders was reflected more broadly in discussions in the village, with men being described as the head of the household (despite many households having a stable female figure who brought money into the home while male members were absent or did not contribute much to the household financially), and Trinidad's female prime minister was criticized for travelling without her husband (and it was implied, reliant on the men around her).[6]

The morality of women and the household they ran was also a greater focus than that of their male counterparts, and women were linked more to Christianity, moral behaviour and church-going than men were. This also fits with Wilson's poles of respectability and reputation that he assigns to Caribbean societies more broadly (1973). Wilson's notions of 'reputation' and 'respectability' can perhaps be described as defining concepts in the anthropology of the Caribbean and link values and desirable attributes to gender.[7] Wilson proposes that respectability is gained from aspects such as marriage and legitimacy, features typical of (what were white) upper classes (1973). Both education and the Christian church were also seen as contributing to respectability and were areas in which girls and women were seen to excel during my time in Trinidad. Wilson argues that women are strongly supportive of respectability- thinking and acting in these terms, and viewing the future through these values and the possible respectability they can ensure for their children if they are unable to become respectable themselves. Reputation is an alternative system of value however and a reaction to respectability- indeed respectability

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[6] It was also often implied more broadly in Trinidad that the prime minister at the time was an alcoholic and I was told locally that this was in part due to her role reversal with her husband. Her immoral positioning in being perceived both as an alcoholic and a Hindu was further reinforced by the fact that she travelled without her husband and was not seen as subservient to him as head of the household.

[7] These poles of 'reputation' and 'respectability' are useful notions to consider when investigating how a Trinidadian self may be constructed. Wilson suggests that respectability is relatively fixed and structured, reflecting a stratified society although there is some possibility for movement within this- lighter skin colour can somewhat contribute to respectability, and while this is beyond individual control, having children with a lighter skinned person to increase the likelihood of offspring also having lighter skin can impact on respectability. Reputation recognizes individual effort and talent, particularly skills that can undermine respectability (Wilson, 1973). The power of individuals to somewhat influence these poles stresses the individualistic nature of Trinidadian culture together with personal control and agency.

for one person can be brought down by gossip relating to another person's attempts to improve their reputation (see Chapter 4). Reputation (or to quote Littlewood's more respectable informants, 'worthless behaviour', 1993) can be increased through undermining the authority of respectability but is also linked to kinship and friendship networks (in Wilson's case 'crews' that can be compared to Trinidadian 'liming' groups). Wilson links reputation to slave resistance and rebellion and he identifies these with what he views as 'lower class' actions. The relationship between both value systems consists of climbing up and pulling down, like crabs in a bucket who pull each other down when they try to escape. Wilson consequently terms these actions as 'crab antics', seeing them as producing a state of balance between respectability and reputation (1973).

Such 'crab antics' have been applied to male identity in Trinidad (Sampath, 1997, Littlewood, 1993) but although Wilson's ideas are intimately tied to notions of gender, they have been criticized for the exclusion of women who are seen as confined to the domestic sphere (Miller, 1994) as well as being viewed as too simplistic as categories (Troillet, 1992). Wilson's linking of women to a respectable, moral domain and to the churches did fit the local context however, and it was interesting to note how male pastors emphasized their previously high positioning on the pole of reputation before their conversion to evangelical churches, something I saw as establishing a link to reputation even when positioned on a pole of respectability. The association of men to 'liming' behaviour, usually gatherings of men who 'hang out' on the streets and roadsides- described by Eriksen as 'the art of idling' (Eriksen, 1990)- also fitted the local context, and provided a direct comparison between hard-working moral behaviour (of women) and immoral, idle, often drinking and gambling behaviour (of men). Village bars or 'rum shops', as well as the roadside were usually the domain of men and people were more critical of women, and the morality of the women, who spent time around these places. Again there was a focus on women's actions as being linked to morality and it was often men who commented on this (again see Chapter 4 on gossip).

‘Then’ and ‘now’: situating the village historically

As noted earlier, other anthropologists have also undertaken fieldwork within the villages along this coast, including Herskovits and Herskovits in 1939 in the first ethnography of the English-speaking Caribbean (Herskovits & Herskovits, 1947) and Littlewood in the early 1980s (Littlewood, 1993). These ethnographies give some indication as to the changes that have occurred in the area over time and concur with reports from my interlocutors. The strong agricultural sector, thriving shops and village life described by Herskovits and Herskovits had largely disappeared and there was little local industry other than fishing and small-scale agriculture. The African-influenced traditions such as the reel dances also described by Herskovits and Herskovits were no longer practiced and the presence of evangelical forms of Christianity and associated practices were far more evident in my work than when Littlewood conducted his fieldwork.[8] These earlier ethnographies give a sense of change to the area over time, but during my fieldwork there was also a strong narrative that locally created an understanding of a particular period of time that was continually compared to contemporary life.

Residents within the village, particularly middle-aged and older individuals, frequently talked about and recalled village life in the latter colonial period and the years immediately following independence (less referred to by people of

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[8] As well as changes to the area over time, there are of course changes to how anthropology views its objects of study and the ways in which fieldwork was undertaken and written up. It is particularly interesting to compare Herskovits and Herskovits’ ethnography of the area in this regard. In their book ‘Trinidad Village’, the village at the centre of their study was portrayed as clearly defined and separate to other areas. The chapters which describe the fieldsite are distinct and clearly separated from each other and a functionalist description of the evidence of cultural transmission of the ‘traditions’ of West Africa passed down through generations and now expressed in a local form make up the key argument to the book. As well as viewing how people came to know and the passing on of knowledge in a structured way- rather than the ideas of fluidity, wayfaring and the making or crafting of knowledge that are more characteristic of contemporary anthropological understandings of knowledge- the distinct and static nature of the descriptions present in Herskovits and Herskovits’ work feel very much like anthropological work of an earlier anthropological time. Not only has the fieldsite changed over time but so has anthropology. I wish to flag up therefore not only the situatedness of the fieldsite within my work historically, but also of the experiences, observations and discussions presented in this work.

Rachel's age). Some community members referred to this period of time as the *ol'time,* a term I have also taken up to refer to this time which is defined less by specific dates and more by specific understandings of what life was like. This was seen as a time when the community looked after each other, children had respect for their elders and worked in honest jobs rather than in the drug trade for example. It was seen as a more organized period- the roads, sea walls and bush being kept in a maintained state and under control. The *ol'time* was safer with less crime and violence and there was work available for people locally (such as on the estates). Residents told me that people used to work hard instead of being dependent on employment schemes that encouraged laziness (the same schemes that Rachel mentions as now being cut). There was more commerce and a range of shops in the village so that a person could buy anything they needed for their wedding without leaving the area, a situation markedly different to when I was there. Goods were viewed as being of better quality and sensibly priced and at the same time people were more self-sufficient. It was a period where people had developed particular knowledge about how to live in greater harmony with nature, to make do with what they had rather than seek many material possessions. More bush medicine remedies were known and they were used more frequently so people were therefore less reliant on biomedical services. I was told that in the *ol'time* people were healthier, eating less processed food and without the contemporary problems of obesity and diabetes found in the area and Trinidad more broadly. It was framed as a better time, before the current problems of Trinidad and a way of life different to that experienced by the younger people in the village and by outsiders, both former and latter groups seen as acting directly against how things were during the *ol'time*. The *ol'time* was compared to a contemporary view of the village as being peripheral and dependent on the wider state economically and politically, a state that was plagued with social and political problems and that did not work towards the interests of the region.

This earlier period was therefore remembered fondly as a time when the village thrived, and was often compared to and constructed as the opposite of contemporary life in the village and Trinidad's current circumstances- it was everything seen to be missing or wrong with everyday life. The time of slavery was referred to also, but as a shocking period with horror stories of what used to happen more widely across Trinidad, Tobago and the Caribbean, never in relation to the local area and rarely with specific details of particular events. Instead it was memories of this *ol'time*, the latter part of the colonial period, that were constantly recalled, a time period which also included the time that Herskovits and Herskovits conducted field work in the area (in 1939, although 'Trinidad Village' was not published until later, in 1947). This view of the *ol'time* appears particularly significant given that community members felt little control over their immediate circumstances: the government-run unemployment schemes relied on by many for an income had recently been cut and the loci of Trinidad's power and control were seen to be based in the capital, Port of Spain and the industrial East-West Corridor running from it. People in this predominantly Afro-Trinidadian community based in a poorer rural area, felt that they were ignored by the (largely) Indo-Trinidadian government who were more concerned with more heavily populated urban and industrial areas of the country, where the majority of their voters lived. Individuals felt that the government made decisions that were not for their benefit and that they could not influence through their own political action. Perhaps because of the perception of low levels of political power locally however, community members strove to be on good terms with 'the ultimate power' over life circumstances- God- and He could be communed with and related to in a way that State power (which was in any case, less effective) could not. God as judge, reliably rewarding or punishing, may have been particularly appealing in a context where the State was seen as unwilling or unable to do the same- community members felt that state institutions were frequently corrupted and the justice system ineffective.

As in Herskovits and Herskovits' time, the local courthouse was situated in the village. More recently a large police station had also been built in the village due to growth of the drug trade in the local area. The overgrown bush growing around the villages along the coast provided good land and cover for growing cannabis, and the many boats along the unguarded coastline allowed an accessible way of transporting this and other drugs, such as cocaine, from South America to other Caribbean islands, and then up to North America. The movement of drugs and the presence of local people involved in the transportation of drugs was known about on a local level, although it was mostly undertaken by those in villages a little further up the coast where there was no police station present. I was shown how it was possible to identify flashes of light between land and sea as boats signaled their presence to each other. Due to their access to boats, fishermen were frequently implied as being involved in this, and particular signs (such as the presence of covers or hoods in boats, not otherwise necessary to fishing) were noted locally as likely to suggest that the boat was involved in the movement of drugs. Boats that went out at night or did not come back at the same time as others were also seen as indicative of involvement, as were expensive purchases (including those for wives and girlfriends), which were otherwise expected to be beyond the means of those living and working nearby. Such goods had been bought through *fass money,* fast or easy money- money that was gained quickly without being earned through hard work. This wealth bought high status and flashy goods, and marked out those able to buy expensive clothing, watches and even cars when others could not. *Fass money* was seen to appeal mainly to younger people who were viewed as too lazy to work (although as Rachel indicates, there were not many sources of local employment), and who wanted to impress others through their material wealth. This was not viewed to be good Christian behaviour and was another way through which the Devil was seen to act on the young and on the nation. Younger people, *fass money*, and the problems with society today were often grouped together and formed another comparison to the older people in the village who tended to see themselves as more moral, more connected to the *ol'time* and often to God.

This distinction between young and old was often made in the village (including by Rachel for example), and while I spoke to both older and younger people, it was often an older crowd who regularly attended the churches and was more present in the village. However it was a difference in actions and perspective rather than age *per se* which formed the different poles evident in the village, and which were the basis of morality more broadly. Christian behaviour, care and respect for the local community and the *ol'time* hung together as values, usually with being older, at one end of the spectrum. Immoral actions (and *fass money*), lack of care for others and the contemporary time hung together, also often with being young, at the other end of the spectrum. As Rachel discusses however, these were not *necessarily* connected, and older people who were less respected in their activities were not viewed as high on the moral end of the pole, and younger people who lived with their grandparents, or who attended church, were also not necessarily categorized as being towards the immoral end.

'Us' and 'them' beyond the village: defining 'local' and 'outside'

In situating the fieldsite then the village could be compared historically with a particular past, and the tensions that united and divided the community also therefore held together a particular space that defined it as a collective. However it was the relationship with the 'them' beyond the village, known as 'outside' and defined through not-being-local, which also formed a key point of comparison for the village- the category 'us' defined by the 'not us'. The boundaries of this 'us' differed slightly, sometimes referring to the immediate village and its surrounds as defined above but also sometimes incorporating the range of villages along the northeast coast. These villages were seen as similar and part of the same area- they were all coastal and somewhat removed from other parts of Trinidad geographically, and all based along the same road that more or less wound along the path of the sea wall. They were all former estates and so now largely 'bush' (being overgrown and neglected), but with fishing and small-scale agriculture as remaining industries. Not all these villages had schools, particular shops, health facilities or churches, and therefore children and other people moved between these on a daily basis. Family members were also often based in nearby villages so there were many kinship networks that spread throughout these. Pastors, the visiting Catholic priest, as well as the Catholic nun based in the area also moved between these villages so there was also a sense of connection through the churches. Nicknames that were assigned by local communities were also often known by other people in the nearby villages and not by outsiders. These names often reflected an element of the person, or something about their history and situation in the village and could often be derogatory. Despite this, those living in the village responded to these given names, the use of which was so common that the Christian names of some villagers were never used (apart from by their immediate family), and were sometimes forgotten. Nicknames were only given to those who had grown up in the village or surrounding area so that holding a nickname also marked inclusion in the community. Familiarity with these names and familiarity with who was related to whom were signs of being ‘local’.

However within this group of villages there were some which were known for particular attributes- some were known for having a larger Spiritual Baptist community for example, others for being particularly cut-off, being insular, for their connection to the drug trade or for the high number of cases of incestuous relationships that were seen to occur there (see Chapter 4 for more on local knowledge). While there were times where the boundaries were drawn around the immediate village, when talking about the rest of Trinidad the notion of ‘us’ was used to incorporate all the villages along the coast, sometimes also including other rural, coastal areas where the majority of the population were Afro-Trinidadian by background. Either way, this was defined by a not-us that consisted of largely Indo-Trinidadian or more mixed communities (and so who could be Hindu or Muslim, or anyway non-Christian), based in urban areas or more centrally within Trinidad, and who were seen as more visible to the government and within Trinidadian life. These were places with more money and more power, and with industry, jobs and facilities. Rachel, like other people I spoke to, described feeling excluded, disadvantaged and left behind by these other areas, and looked down on by people within these. The village (and the local area) was different, marginal to the rest of Trinidad both for those within it and for others outside it. Many people I met in Port of Spain also saw the area as ‘other’, being ‘bush’ (in a derogatory sense), a place where there was more *obeah* and more ‘superstition’. Even for anthropologists such as Miller who worked in more central areas of the country (1994), the local area was not described as part of Trinidad.

The village community also came together to respond to outside forces- people were proud of those who came from local area and were doing well as this was seen to reflect positively on the village. Likewise if a person from the local area committed a crime it was seen to reflect negatively. Crimes undertaken within the village by outsiders were also viewed harshly and independent forms of justice could be dealt out. I was told that a few years previously some people from ‘outside’ were trying to steal engines from the boats of local fishermen. Not only were these people run out of the area by members of the community (fishermen and non-fishermen alike) but I was told that they also had their legs and arms broken in the process- as was declared proudly ‘we look after our own’. Again in relation to definitions of self within the village, boundaries were defined and characteristics ascribed in relation to differing others outside the village- ‘us’ was sometimes a broader category than at other times, depending on the ‘them’ being defined against.

Divisions between the local area and ‘outside’ were not the only distinctions within Trinidad of course, and broader divisions based on ethnicity (chiefly a split between Indo-Trinidadians and Afro-Trinidadians), rural and urban areas, religious differences and differences in wealth were also all present and connected to the history of Trinidad as a nation. These demonstrated the many separated components which were united by a broader concept of being ‘a Trini’ or Trinidadian, the oft-cited notion that ‘all o we is one’ despite such differences. As on a local level, there were times of union and division, separate elements able to be situated together so that they reflected an almost fractual quality- part of the same form at a particular level but breaking apart when placed under closer scrutiny.

The boundaries of a Trinidadian community were also not limited by geographical situatedness within the nation itself. Despite being a relatively poor area almost every household in the village reported having a member of the family living in the USA, Canada or the UK.[9] Whereas after colonialism Trinidadians were keen to go to the UK, a desire to emigrate to the USA and/or Canada was now more popular. The influence of the USA and American culture on Trinidad came not only through the US airbases present in Trinidad during the Second World War and after, but more recently through American television and US church missionaries. Many local churches had been visited by, and received money from, churches based in the USA. This has also been the case for other Caribbean nations and Austin-Broos (1997) suggests that close links to American churches was one way in which Jamaicans responded to a new regime and to the decreasing influence of Britain following the end of colonialism. The view of the USA as a place of money and success (and particularly where black people were able to be successful, Barak Obama and Oprah Winfrey frequently used as examples of this) was evident not only in the village but within some of my young professional friends in the Port of Spain area. Locally there were a number of people who had gone to work in the USA, often undertaking domestic work and resident without visas, who left their children in the care of their parents. There were quite a number of children being brought up by grandparents therefore, while their parents sent money and barrels of goods back, providing more profitable and reliable income than searching for work or ‘hustling’ locally. Among those I knew in Port of Spain who had more steady jobs and were more highly educated, there were those who also dreamed of moving to a new life in America and who had their name in the USA green card lottery just in case it came up and they were able to get a visa.

USA trade and policy were also seen to impact on Trinidad. The TT (Trinidad and Tobago) dollar aligned to the US dollar and it was thought that

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[9] See Appendix I for more details on connections to people outside Trinidad from my household survey.

circumstances that occurred there would also affect Trinidad- as I was told ‘when the US sneezes, Trinidad catches the cold’. To some extent Trinidad’s relationship to the USA was therefore similar to the relationship between the village and the rest of Trinidad- marginal and dependent but still a separate place, similar also to the position of Trinidad under colonialism- dependent on outside forces, somehow defined by these but also a separate nation.

At the same time as people were interlinked to each other and to groups at difference scales, they were also individuals- separate but connected, even to the rest of the world. This was perhaps a trait characteristic of Caribbean cultures and authors such as Miller have stressed that while Trinidad and the USA both have cultures of individualism, these forms of individualism are different. Such differences, and the wider notions of connected-to-yet-still-distinct can also be linked to Trinidad’s colonial past- a population, history and nation created through slavery and colonialism where to be part of Trinidad was also to be part of wider networks, populations, histories and nations. Trinidad itself, as well as those within it, was connected to the rest of world and yet still separate. This fieldsite too was also connected yet separate so that it was still meaningful to talk about experiences and understandings as being ‘local’ and within ‘the village’ without seeing these as entirely separated from Trinidad itself, nor even from the rest of the world.

3. The material and other worlds

Sayeed called me over as I passed by. He was sitting in his usual place, a green plastic chair under mango trees in front of his house in the centre of the village and from where it was possible to get a good view of everything that happened at this section of the main road. It was a great spot to sit and observe and Sayeed was good company so I often stopped by on my way home to chat and hear what had gone on in the day. On this occasion Sayeed was his usual cheery self, although more so as he excitedly told me that I'd just missed one of the older female residents of the village shouting at Jonathan, telling him off for turning *gombo*. This was hilarious according to Sayeed, she was 'real vex' with him, as Jonathan insisted on continuing to use magical spells to enter rooms of women in the village, keeping their husbands and others in the house asleep and sexually molesting these women. I had heard such accusations against Jonathan and another local community member also reported to turn *gombo*, many times previously, as well as hearing some people's accounts of such encounters. Cherise, who was in her early twenties, was one of these accounts, and she related her experiences as part of a discussion with a group of her female peers.

Cherise went to bed one night as usual, wearing her nightclothes and underpants. She slept all night next to her husband[1] but when she woke up in the morning her underpants were on the dressing table next to her and she knew that she had been visited in the night by a *gombo* who had had sexual intercourse with her while both her and her husband slept. Neither of them had woken during the attack as the *gombo* had used a spell to keep them both fast asleep. The *gombo* had entered and exited through a door, or window, to the house by using spells to open and close this. After Cherise got out of her bed that morning, she looked out of the window and saw Jonathan walking by. Her

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[1] Husband as a term is often used by women, and others, to refer to their long-term male partner even if they are not legally married.

grandmother had told her that the first person she saw after she woke up was the *gombo* who had molested her. Seeing Jonathan not only indicated that she had been attacked by him but was also further proof that the attack had occurred, as everyone knew that Jonathan was a local *gombo*. This encounter was then discussed among her friends, and while there was general agreement that the first person seen in the morning was the *gombo* who attacked the individual (something that they had been told by their parents and grandparents), the others in the group had not themselves had such experiences, although they know other women locally who had.

Jonathan always denied such attacks, and the ability to undertake these, to everyone who asked him- although everyone agreed that of course he would deny involvement. Jonathan and I had also discussed the accusations against him, Jonathon believing that such stories existed as they were spread by the Devil as revenge for Jonathan being such a good servant to God (Jonathan was an active member of the Seventh Day Adventist church and a local (informal) preacher). Like Job he saw himself as being tested, and that the Devil comes after God's most faithful most vehemently. However both Jonathan and the other person locally accused of being a *gombo* had particular backgrounds that marked them out from others in the village and that likely contributed to both of these individuals being accused.

Jonathan was an elder in the local Seventh Day church, but quite socially awkward and was seen as a little foolish, both in the community and within the Adventist church itself. His dress, practices and language appeared to be trying to imitate those of other elders in the village but were not quite right- the tie and shirt that did not match, the quiz question that he set and gave an incorrect answer to, the presentations that used incorrect Bible quotes. More significantly however he had never married nor had had a girlfriend, had no children and lived alone. These, and his enthusiasm for the church, went against the behaviour of most of the men locally and fitted with the more feminine 'respectable' pole, rather than the male 'reputation' pole in Wilson's dichotomy.

The other local *gombo* was also seen as socially awkward, he dressed eccentrically, was the only Orisha practitioner in the area and had also never married nor had had a girlfriend locally but had stayed at home to look after his parents until they died. He was also rumoured to take women's undergarments off their washing lines (significant also as undergarments are used to 'tie' people using *obeah*, see Chapters 5 and 6). He also had no children, which was extremely unusual in an area where children were highly prized (demonstrating a man's fertility and fully-functioning member), and again did not fit into the macho 'reputation' culture of the men locally.

Both these men seemed generally good intentioned individuals but were a little off the mark socially in their everyday actions and in their lack of family and children. They were both spiritually active but not in respectable ways, so had neither reputation in the community nor within churches. There were some doubts about the morality of both men and their expression of sexuality, and therefore the role of people who turn to spiritual wickedness to gain sexual fulfilment fitted well with their positioning within the community. They were also seen as harmless, slightly pest-like in their everyday interactions, which fitted in with how *gombo* attacks were viewed. Unlike other cases of spiritual wickedness and devil-worship, *gombo*-behaviour was seen to be more a form of anti-social action rather than the out-and-out evilness of other spirit work. It was acceptable to verbally attack *gombos* in the street, to tell them off for their behaviour in a way that would never be done with people of real spiritual power. Such reprimands were also amusing, and were noteworthy gossip.

As well as turning *gombo*, it was said that there had been those locally who learned spells to shape-shift or become *soucoyant*. *Soucoyants* were vampires said to shed their skin, fly in a ball of fire and suck the blood of other local villagers at night while they slept. A *soucoyant* might develop a particular taste for a particular person and come back to them night after night, tracking them down even if they slept elsewhere. While I heard stories of previous *soucoyant* attacks, there were not viewed to be any local individuals currently who did this, although there was speculation that there might be people further along the coast that did. Shape-shifters were individuals who could turn into other things such as goats or dogs, and in one case locally, a bicycle. These items were known to be people who had shape-shifted as they were particularly large- too big to be naturally that size and in the case of the bicycle, moved without a rider. Crucially also, all of these things had attacked community members. Like *obeah*, such abilities were used to get at others in the community 'for spite' if no other reason. While these spiritual skills were viewed by some as a form of *obeah*, they were not seen as being as dangerous as other *obeah* work, and like *gombos,* were more seen more as anti-social.

Many older local people had been victims of these attacks over the years. Evidence of *soucouyant* attack was indicated by bruises on the body and generally if such bruises were seen in the village, people remarked on them- 'look like *soucouyant* suck ya!'. Even if they had not been directly attacked, people and particularly hunters who went into the bush at night, would report seeing balls of light, *soucoyant* fire balls in the forest and sometimes over the sea. Accounts of shape-shifter attacks such as large goats that had attacked people walking around at night, were also relayed but in general attacks from both of these were seen to happen more in the past than currently. Such skills were learned, and as the older heads (or *ol' folk*) died out these skills were not passed on, partially as younger people did not listen to their elders anymore. That such skills were not being passed on was not seen as a bad thing, and there were others who suggested that the *ol'folk* were simply more 'wicked' than people today.

All such attacks occurred at night and steps to prevent them could be taken, for example by using Holy Water and oil around windows and door frames and placing grains of salt or sand outside the house (*soucoyant* were thought to have to stop and count all of these before they could enter). Other people told me that they were not worried about *gombo* or other attack as they were 'covered in the blood'- Jesus' blood, spilt for the good of mankind, and therefore these people were protected by God. *Gombos*, *soucoyant* and shape-shifters were part of wider local cosmological understandings and like other elements of this cosmological system, were illustrative of how these conceptualisations were shifting with contemporary circumstances. In the rest of this chapter I lay out these key cosmological understandings as described through discussions and interpretations of events and practices. These form the background to more specific understandings around misfortune that will be examined in more depth in Part II.

The spirit world and its agents

While there were some differences in understandings across the churches, there were central components of a Christian cosmological framework that were understood by the vast majority of local people. This framework was as follows: there are two strong spiritual forces, God and the Devil, good and evil, and they are both engaged in battle over human souls, each trying to claim souls for themselves. When the world ends, these souls will be on opposing sides, battling against each other. God will win and reward those that followed him. Followers of the Devil might gain benefits in this life through selling their soul to the Devil (for example for financial and political success), but in the end they would suffer horribly. God is the stronger of these two forces and in control of everything that happens. From tidal waves to election results to finding lost spectacles, from the global to the local to the individual, God was seen to be in control of every large and small thing. While God was in control, the Devil was always there, trying to influence the individual to follow him instead of God. The Devil caused all that was bad in the world, anything that was good was of God, anything not good was ungodly and therefore devilish. God did not directly punish people therefore, however He might allow the Devil to work on the individual to cause them harm.

The extent to which the Devil could harm the individual depended on their closeness to God, often indicated by their individual morality. If the individual acted in a morally appropriate Christian way, they were closer to God and they might be rewarded with health and good fortune. The more that an individual had contact with God, the easier it became to engage in moral actions, and the easier it was to follow God's path. The Devil would always try to tempt the individual away however, to gain their soul for the End of Days. The more the individual engaged in immoral behaviour the closer they were to the Devil and the harder it was to get away from him. This may result in the individual becoming spirit possessed, oppressed, obsessed or suffer with an illness caused by evil spirits. The more godly the person was, the harder the Devil may try to take them, as the more humiliating it was for God. But by being close to God the individual was 'covered in the blood' and so was protected from evil. Such positioning therefore also gave a basis for moral ordering and suggested a form of justice and fairness where an individual's morality impacted on their situation in life.

Crucially, humans were given individual agency when they were created by God. It was therefore understood that it was down to the individual to decide whether they followed God or the Devil, and also whether to behave morally or immorally. The individual was responsible for their choice and their behaviour- whether they followed God or the Devil- and therefore little sympathy might be given to individuals who suffered afflictions that arose from following the Devil. Negative occurrences such as illness or crime, happened to a person because they were not covered in the blood, they were not close enough to God. Children and individuals with mentally limited capacity were less blamed for these results as they did not have the same ability to make such choices, although being limited mentally might itself be a punishment for immorality by the individual's family. While misfortune was due to straying from God, equally misfortune might occur as the Devil went hardest after God's most faithful followers. God could also allow the Devil to work on the individual to prove their devotion to God (for example in the biblical story of Job), or so that God's glory may be revealed for others to convert souls (for example in healing an individual from severe sickness). The lines around suffering and misfortune could therefore in reality be elastic, sickness and misfortune could be interpreted by individuals or in families as a test from God, while others in the community viewed it as punishment for sin.

The Devil did not work alone in acting on the human world. He had legions of evil spirits that did his work for him so that individuals more frequently encountered the Devil's spiritual agents rather than the Devil himself. These spirits might be felt as present in particular places and at particular times, and may make their presence known through their actions. Evil spirits could dwell within those who were not close to God, and may inhabit graveyards, schools or other areas. They could be placed on objects through the use of *obeah* so that if these were touched by those not covered in the blood, these spirits may enter them. These spirits were under the Devil's command and were arranged in hierarchies, more powerful spirits being higher up. Powerful spirits could attack God's more faithful followers, the more powerful the individual was in life, the more powerful the spirits needed to work on them.

Humans who worked in league with the Devil worked with different levels of spirits, who in turn give them different levels of power. Spirits were often linked to power, individuals who were particularly powerful having reached their positions through being in league with the Devil. These was also how *obeah* worked. More powerful *obeahmen/women* worked with more powerful (evil) spirits, so that if someone had put *obeah* on a person they may look for a source of more powerful *obeah* magic to remove this[2]. Spiritual power linked to socio-political power, and greater socio-political power indicated higher spiritual power. I was told that no one locally had great spiritual power, although there had been individuals in the past who had this. This can be linked to socio-political power in the local area- no one locally was seen to have socio-political power, although this was not the case in the past when the village was a thriving colonial centre.

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[2] Followers of Orisha were also locally seen to be in league with various levels of spirits.

God had legions of angels that worked in hierarchies and the hierarchies of God and the Devil were seen to mirror each other. While some individuals might refer to guardian angels that protected people, these were little talked about generally, the main focus of attention being the Devil and the workings of evil spirits, and God and the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was part of the Godhead (made up of God the father, Jesus the son, and the Holy Spirit). It was through the actions of the Holy Spirit that God worked on earth, so it was the Holy Spirit that people most often felt the presence of, and were led by. It was the Holy Spirit that dwelt inside God's faithful servants, leading them and keeping them close to God, and the Holy Spirit that was called into church services, meetings, homes, schools, to work within these settings. Jesus was with God in heaven, and could be prayed to as an intermediary to God. Jesus was a personification of God, and so was referred to in material form in church services- his blood, his flesh, his suffering. Like the Pentecostalists in Austin-Broos' work in Jamaica (1997), in the evangelical churches Jesus could be described in terms that were similar to a lover or boyfriend, more dependable, faithful, desirable and caring than many of the men locally- although this was not a language with which all in the congregation were necessarily happy. Catholics prayed to Mary and the Saints as intermediaries and did not describe the same relationship to Jesus.

Spiritual Baptists talked most clearly about two worlds, a spirit world and a material, or carnal, world. However this was also an understanding described by others outside the Spiritual Baptist church. Humans lived in the material world, while there was another, parallel, spirit world. What happened in one world also occurred in the other, so powerful people in this world were spiritually powerful in the other. There were crossing points between these worlds, for example when Spiritual Baptists went 'down to mourn', where individuals ritually entered a dream-like state for a number of days while they entered and navigated the spirit world. Events they saw and participated in while there also occurred in the material world. Communication between the material and the spiritual worlds occured through prayer, dreams and other communicative states. Catholics and evangelical Christians did not describe these two worlds in such depth, but they understood a mimicry to occur between the material world and the spiritual world, for example in terms of power in one world also occurring in the other. Mimicry was also seen in the Devil mimicking God by having legions of evil spirits opposite God's legions of angels, and both God and the Devil giving similar gifts. The material world was seen as being more connected to the Devil, it was the world in which the Devil was able to operate in and where concerns over material possessions (an immoral concern), were more important than spiritual devotion and morality. This could be contrasted to heaven, which was God's world, where spirituality was rewarded and bodily concerns were not present.[3]

Across the churches there was concern about the end of the world- the End of Days. While the specific aspects of the End of Days was most strongly stressed in the evangelical churches, with excerpts from The Book of Revelation being used to guide such discussions, a more general concern about the end of the world was also present in those who did not attend these churches. The End of Days was seen as a time when there would be the final battle between good and evil, God and the Devil. Good would triumph over evil and non-followers, or those who were not attached to the true church (which varied depending on the denomination of the individual relating the story), would be harshly punished. There were a number of signs that suggested that the End of Days was coming- the earth would feel the greater influence of the Devil, things would be out of control, dangerous, disordered. The Anti-Christ would appear and Jesus would finally return to take back control. It was generally viewed that the current circumstances of Trinidad and of the world more generally, were indicative of the beginning of the End of Days. The high rates of crime and violence, natural disasters, the worldwide recession were all seen as evidence of the Devil being more active in the world. Increasing worldwide secularization and the growth of atheism were also seen as an increase in devil-worshipping, for if one was not

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[3] However the evangelical churches also stressed that spiritual rewards in heaven might be of a material nature, for example beautiful buildings, nice cars, delicious food, all material desires met.

with God, one was with the enemy (the Devil). Specific world events were related to biblical episodes, for example the twelve tribes of Israel coming together from the north which would occur in the last days was compared to the development of the European Union.[4] It was also suggested that the Anti-Christ would be a European man who would announce that he knew the secret to recovery from recession in Europe so all would follow him. National and international events were interpreted through this perspective throughout my time in the field, and also demonstrate the situatedness of such ideas in contemporary circumstances.

Communication between humans and spirits

Communication between humans and spirits occurred primarily through prayer, dreams and other trance-like states that were entered into. These most often allowed direct interaction with God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, or the Devil and other devilish spirits. Many Catholics prayed through intermediaries such as Mary or the Saints, who would then appeal to God on their behalf. Communication through such means was conceptualized as occurring within the person in a bodily place that was beyond the level of the individual's mind, but rather, as some people described it, directly to their soul[5].

Prayers were the most frequent form of communication and might be undertaken individually or in groups. Prayers invited the Holy Spirit, or devilish spirits, to engage in communion and provided a space for communication. The Holy Spirit was asked for advice, direct assistance or just spoken to, for example to tell of troubles. These communications were important to build spiritual strength, and contributed to the development of such strength, keeping

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[4] These understandings can also be compared to Robbins' (2004a) findings from his fieldwork site that his Urapmin interlocutors were concerned that the Gulf War was a sign of Christ's imminent return. He notes too that other evangelicalists have written of their concerns that the formation of the European Economic Community marked the beginning of the end of times (2004, p161).

[5] Greater detail on the experience and use of prayer locally is given in Lynch, 2013.

the individual more moral in their actions and closer to God- or to the Devil if the individual had made such a choice. The more regularly such conversations were held, the better the relationship with the spirits, and the greater the individual’s spiritual strength. Regularity also made it easier to communicate, and meant it was more likely that spirits would act on the conversation. Prayers could be made more effective through praying in groups- the more people praying together, the more power was present and the greater power the prayers had. Fasting also improved prayer, working physiologically to free blood to go to the head allowing clearer thinking and ability to pray. This resulted in ‘feeling more spiritual’, something which was also achieved by denying the self food, moving the individual from a focus on the material to a focus on the spiritual realm (see Chapter 5 for more detail on the relationship between fasting and prayer).

Communication with the Devil, or devilish spirits through *obeah* were termed ‘prayers’, albeit ‘bad prayers. *Gombos*, *soucoyants* and shape-shifters were understood to be able to act through saying specific ‘bad prayers’ that allowed them to open locked doors or keep those they were attacking fast asleep, as Cherise’s describes. Communication through prayer might be heard by God, or by the Devil therefore. Some individuals in the Pentecostal church voiced the concern that the Devil may listen to prayers intended for God. One local woman had had problems with this previously, and therefore when there were parts of a prayer she was particularly keen for the Devil not to hear, she prayed to God *in tongues*, a sacred spiritual language that the Devil could not understand and that she had been given the gift of by God. Responses to prayers could also come while praying, but might come through dreams too.

Both God and the Devil could communicate through dreams, giving guidance, direction and providing answers, as well as passing on their own wishes for individuals to carry out. Usually the dreamer was able to discern for themselves whether the dream cames from God or the Devil- if it involved undertaking anything ungodly, then it must by default come from the Devil. Those people with a good relationship with God were more likely to have dreams from God, and the many cases of God communicating through dreams in the Bible were cited as examples of this. In Spiritual Baptism in particular, God's communication through dreams was important, and God also communicated through the experience of going down to mourn. Spiritual Baptists were particularly adept at dream interpretation, but some spiritually strong individuals in other churches locally also had this gift, for example Joy in the Pentecostal church, or Hayley, an Anglican. If an individual was unable to discern the meaning of a dream, family and friends, as well as particularly gifted individuals, might be asked for assistance in interpretation.

Through dreams, in prayer, in trance, or in mourning in the case of Spiritual Baptists, the individual entered a more spiritual state, one through which communication became easier. In such states the individual was opening themselves up to the spiritual, for the Holy Spirit, or other spirits, to work through them. The Holy Spirit worked by literally being inside people, and should the individual allow themselves to be an instrument, the Holy Spirit could manifest itself, for example in church services. Equally, the individual could open themselves up to the Devil, demons then working inside them. The degree of control the individual had over this varied, and depended on their spiritual strength and power. If they had a good relationship with the Devil, he might increase their material strength and power also. These communicative states could therefore be vulnerable times, and if the individual was not sufficiently spiritually strong they may be at risk of spiritual attack, a means through which individuals may become possessed.

Both the Holy Spirit and evil spirits were able to communicate through the body therefore, and communication might be felt to emerge from inside the individual, rather than from outside. Communication from God was described as an 'urge', a 'feeling', as being led from within, and rarely as a voice from outside, although this did occur on occasion. Communications needed to be discerned as to whether these were godly or devilish, but this was easier for those who were regular communicators committed to whichever spirits they worked with as 'the sheep know the shepherd's voice'.[6]

God, or the Devil, might also communicate through influencing the actions of others, including actions that transmitted specific messages to the individual, for example how to handle a particular situation in response to an individual's prayer. Communication also came through God or the Devil creating signs or circumstances, such as making cars drive off the local winding roads, or creating natural disasters such as hurricanes or the (then recent) Japanese tsunami. These were interpreted at the individual level, including in discussion with others, but were also referred to and interpreted in church services as a way through which God was communicating with His flock, or the Devil was acting on the earth. Natural disasters, as well as violence, corruption and crime at the national level, were interpreted as signaling the End of Days, as well as Trinidad's current circumstances, all clearly indicative of the Devil working on earth.

Individual spirituality

While individuals who turned *gombo*, or *soucoyant* or who shape-shifted, had spiritual *skills*, this was very different to spiritual *strength*: how strong an individual was spiritually. Such a spiritual strength related to spiritual power, and came from the good relationship an individual built up with spirits, either the Holy Spirit or particular evil spirits. Individuals developed their spiritual strength through Bible (or devilish book) study, regular prayer, and talking frequently with God, or evil spirits. This strength was internally developed usually over years of communication and therefore years of a relationship with a spirit, who then rewarded the individual by responding to and assisting them.[7] As spiritual

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[6] This is taken from John 10, verse 27: 'My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me' (NKJV).

[7] This linked to how *obeah* was seen to work. The individual perceived themselves as having a level of control over the *obeah* spirits, but actually such spirits were devilish, the Devil merely

strength linked to spiritual power, those who were very spiritually powerful were potentially also very dangerous. These individuals were to be respected and/or feared. Power from spiritual strength derived from devilish spirits might differ depending on position of the spirit in the devil's hierarchy.

Spiritually powerful individuals had a level of influence with the spirit world, and could have gifts, such as having premonitions, being able to read dreams, heal, and/or speak *in tongues*. All of these were gifts of the Holy Spirit but could also be given in a similar way by the Devil.[8] Spiritual power also often meant actual socio-political power. Local people were more often seen to have spiritual strength linked to God rather than to the Devil so while they were not spiritually, or socio-politically powerful, people felt that they had moral superiority over more powerful people, placing themselves as higher within a wider moral order.

Individual spiritual strength therefore indicated individual spiritual power, and was maintained by living a good Christian life, listening to, and being led by, the Holy Spirit. Prayers made by these individuals were thought to be particularly effective, and indeed such individual spiritual power may be revealed by an ability to have prayers answered. As spiritual strength could be built up *either* with the Holy Spirit *or* particular evil spirits, the concept of spiritual strength stressed individual spiritual relationships and individual spirituality.[9] Concepts of hierarchies of spirits, and of individual spiritual strength, brought in degrees of

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allowing the individual to think they had control over the spirit. This was a way in which the individual was lured closer to the Devil, asking for and carrying out what the Devil wished them to do while at the same time the individual understood these thoughts to be their own. This tied also to understandings of spirit oppression, where spirits affected an individual's thinking, although they may not realize this was occurring (see Chapter 6 for more detail on this).

[8] Some people were also born with a particular existing spiritual connection, for example by being born 'with a hood' (the caul) over their faces. Children were seen as more spiritual, they were initially unable to choose between God and the Devil and therefore God kept them closer to Him. Sometimes the innate spiritual qualities of a child (in terms of the spiritual powers they were likely to go on to develop) could be seen at a young age, for example a child who contemplated or studied the Bible. Individuals might also therefore refer to spiritual abilities they developed as a child to illustrate how spiritual they were now. Local people occasionally told stories of how their strong spiritual strength had allowed them to defeat the Devil.

[9] Such individualism, individual agency and an individual self is also highlighted in other ethnographic work conducted in Trinidad, by Littlewood (1993, 2007) and Miller (1991, 1994).

spirituality to this otherwise black and white understanding of God versus the Devil, both humans and spiritual agents embodying these degrees. A personalized relationship with God also brought about an internalized selfhood, the individual had to engage in self-scrutiny- am I good enough? Moral enough? This form of Protestant introspection, where an individual's very essence might be their greatest danger in their human frailty and propensity to sin, brought a focus on individual morality leading to punishment or reward as individuals were judged by God. Moral behaviour was therefore important in indicating and sustaining spiritual strength.

Everyone was seen to have a degree of spiritual strength and was not limited to denomination. While the level of their spiritual power was disputed for some individuals more than others, in particular people it was very clear, for example in the case of the Independent International Baptist Church pastor and Pentecostal headteacher (Chapter 2) who were recognized as spiritually strong by people across the churches. Spiritual strength thus stressed an individual relationship to God, spirits, and spirituality of an individual nature. This personal relationship to God that was not via an intermediary such as a priest, or Saints, was also an important component of evangelical churches.

Ol'time spiritual creatures and forces

In addition to the spirit agents above, there were other creatures and forces that appeared less often in individual's understandings, but that formed a background to living in the area. These were more common in the *ol'time*, like *soucoyant* and *gombos* and shape-shifters. Tales of encounters came mainly from older people, but also from some younger people who had heard stories from their grandparents. While there were still some experiences of these spirits, they largely seemed to be on the wane and part of understandings of the world connected to an earlier time.

Spirit creatures

Local cosmology to some extent also included spiritual creatures. While heard of throughout Trinidad, the villages along the northeast coast and the bush surrounding them were particularly known for being places where such creatures resided. These included: *Papa Bois* (the protector of the forest), *Mama D'Glo* (*Mama de L'Eau*, a mermaid who lived in local rivers), *douen* (creatures who were the souls of un-baptised children and who took young children into the bush), *lo Jabless (L'Diablesse*, a half-woman, half-creature who tried to seduce men into having sex with her, only for them to wake up in a thistle patch) and *Lagahoo* (*La Garou*, a shape-shifting, werewolf-type creature who walked with a coffin, pulling chains on the ground). Both local people and visitors to the area claimed to have seen or had experiences with these creatures, most commonly with *douen* who could also be heard and made a ghostly and un-human piping sound which could also be mistaken for crying children. Such stories of these encounters were traditionally told at wakes, but these did not happen as they did in the past.[10]

These creatures were said to be rarely seen now due to the wide-spread presence of electrical lights and car exhaust fumes, both of which were disliked by these spirits and so kept them away: products of modernity kept these traditional creatures at bay. Such creatures were not only a traditional element of the past, but were also morally ambiguous and did not easily fit into an evangelical framework that viewed cosmological agents as either good or bad. Some in the village drew on these evangelical frameworks to suggest that these spirits were actually fallen-angels or devilish spirits, certainly in the case of *douen*, which were more frequently experienced and more nefarious in their activity. Others however suggested that these creatures were merely '*nancy*

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[10] During my period of fieldwork I met two people who had had met *Mama D'Glo*, three or four men who had had close friends who had encountered a *L'Diablesse*, (only one who confessed to having actually encountered her), no one who had encountered a *Lagahoo* firsthand but a number who had hear chains being dragged in the street at night. There were a number of hunters who had had 'close' *Papa Bois* encounters while hunting, they had heard sounds, felt they were being watched, and knew it was *Papa Bois* without seeing him.

stories',[11] stories that were made up to frighten people, perhaps with the purpose of stopping children wondering off into the bush or individuals walking alone at night.

Jumbies and other spirits

Jumbies were the spirits of dead people, similar to ghosts or zombies. Sometimes they inhabited a particular space where someone had died, for example a friend from the East-West Corridor told me that there was a *jumbie* that was often seen from the road at the site of a person's death. These could be found under bridges and in graveyards also, and it was graveyards that *obeahmen/women* were said to go to find such *jumbies*. *Jumbies* were used in *obeah* to carry out the *obeahman*/*woman's* wishes- when an *obeahman* sent a spirit on a person, it was a *jumbie*, the spirit of a dead person that was sent. Some *jumbies* were more suitable for this task than others. If one could gain the spirit of someone who was stubborn, cantankerous or strong in life, their spirit would be similar and they would be more effective.

It was difficult to distinguish the differences between *jumbies* and other evil spirits as these terms were used interchangeably by some people. Both might make their way into cars or houses to cause accidents or disharmony and needed removing. Cars and houses were often blessed to keep such spirits out. *Jumbies* were more likely to be talked about in terms of spirits that could sit on a person's chest in the night and paralyze them,[12] while people talked about spirits as being responsible for entering people including through food and drink, some food and drink being particularly susceptible, for example milk. These evil spirits were everywhere but particularly in graveyards, in the bush,

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[11] Made-up, or fairy stories, the term 'nancy' thought to come from tales of Anansi, the trickster spider-man, brought from West Africa to the Caribbean through slavery.

[12] C.f. *duppies* in Jamaica. These experiences are very similar to *Old Hag* in Newfoundland and other cross-cultural experiences of nightmares and sleep paralysis. A girl who told me about her experience of being pinned down by a *jumbie* while she slept told me that she could be released only by praying to God.

and also around the sea and rivers. Their activity was more prevalent at night, especially around dusk but also after midnight.[13] While spirits fitted well into the evangelical cosmology, *jumbies* were not as easily incorporated. More evangelical individuals suggested that as people's souls did not wander around the earth after death, all such spirits including *jumbies* must therefore be evil spirits rather than the spirits of humans. Although this view was not shared by everyone, it might explain why there was a lack of clarity in terms. The term *jumbie* was also used more broadly in Trinidadian culture including songs by *soca* artists who suggested people dance, wine and drink like a *jumbie* (with abandon) and the traditional Carnival character of *moko-jumbies*.[14]

Spirits were generally found at more ambivalent times such as dusk (between day and night), in ambivalent places such as the bush and the sea (that both give and take away) and graveyards (links between life and death), and in other places of risk also connected to ambivalence (at night-time, on roads). As well as being present in such circumstances, lack of control inherent to particular objects or children meant that these were particularly susceptible to spiritual attack. Spirits could get into cars where they caused accidents, houses where they caused arguments and ill-feeling, fishing boats where they caused accidents or no fish to be caught, schools where they caused bad behaviour in children, or young children or babies where they caused distress and changes in behaviour.[15] All of these items may be blessed to prevent spirits from affected them.

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[13] It was said that if you returned to your house after midnight then you should walk in backwards so that a spirit cannot follow you in.

[14] These were spirits that had very long legs and who stood with a leg over each side of the road. When an individual walked underneath these legs, they might be caught as the *jumbie* snapped their legs together. This kind of *jumbie* was also called a *phantom*. In Carnival, these characters were played by people, usually young men, on tall stilts and a tall man in the village was given the nickname 'Phantom' because of his height.

[15] Young children and babies might be susceptible to spiritual attacks as they had not developed the same spiritual strength as adults.

Mal-jo

Mal-jo (evil eye) or *blight* also appeared to have been encountered more frequently in the past than in more recent times and Littlewood's work further up the northeast coast also supports this. His fieldwork undertaken around thirty years before mine found cases of *mal-jo* to be more prevalent than during the time I was in the village (Littlewood, 1992; Littlewood, personal communication, 2013). Littlewood describes *mal-jo* as creating a 'failure to thrive', a withering particularly in babies, children and plants. *Mal-jo* was understood to be more of a natural than a spiritually driven issue, being caused by the jealousy of others, often without intent. Despite being less prevalent, actions to avoid passing on *mal-jo* accidently were undertaken, such as not complimenting the attractiveness of children or babies which may indicate jealousy and thus *mal-jo*. Some people however were thought to carry *blight* with them wherever they went, and were likely to pass this on. One of these people locally was said to be a church elder in the area who was anyway seen to be a difficult character. There appeared to be real delight in attributing *blight* to him and I heard stories of plants dying under his care and people's own plants withering following a visit from him. After such a visit, when leaves were seen to start drooping, blue dye such as *washing blue* (blue washing powder) was poured on to plants to treat *blight*. Blue bottles displayed outside would also keep this away from an individual's house and garden. Children, or more often babies, who suffered from *mal-jo,* were taken to a local person who removed this by hitting the infant with the plant *sweet-broom* in a particular manner so that the *mal-jo* was driven away. While local people knew of *mal-jo*, it was not now a regular occurrence and a person famed locally for removal had died without being replaced. Issues with an infants' wellbeing were now more often attributed to the work of devilish spirits rather than *mal-jo*.

New dangers

While many *ol'time* risks appeared to be on the wane, stories of new dangers from medicines, pollution and chemicals appeared on the rise. While the old risks emerged from within the local area, these new dangers emerged from outside but affected those within it. These included risks to health from chemicals in the air, sprayed on food or in the water, illnesses created by the CIA (such as HIV/AIDS), medicines that controlled and poisoned, and national and international leaders and celebrities that worshipped and were being led by the Devil. Newspapers, pamphlets, internet films and websites provided evidence of such activities, and were spread within churches and social groups. Current news items might also provide further evidence of these risks, as news stories were understood through these idioms. Therefore news stories about American celebrities, international political actions, the food industry, agriculture or changing weather conditions all might be seen to demonstrate new uncontrollable dangers present in the world.

Contextualizing cosmological understandings

Cosmological understandings are situated both historically and culturally; they emerge from the context in which they are situated. Changes over time and the impact of particular influences can alter these understandings, such as the recent growth of evangelical Christianity and the decrease in popularity of churches that were once more prominent, such as the Spiritual Baptist church. Newer concepts might be adopted, others might not, and existing understandings might be incorporated, reinterpreted or fade away. Contextualizing local cosmological understandings of the relationships and interactions between humans and spiritual agents, allows an interpretation of the development and key elements of these, and why they may be powerful modes of understanding the world. Cosmological understandings were not fixed or rigid but were more partial and bitty, becoming clearer, more murky, or both, for individuals over time. As discussed earlier, these cosmological understandings are better conceptualized as culturally relevant and historically situated assemblages, rather than a cohesive belief system. The elements in such assemblages remain stable rather than permanent and as such are amenable to change.

This concept of assemblages also more easily accounts for differences in people's understandings. While some key aspects of the understandings above were found in most people's conceptualizations, some elements (and practices) were more specific to particular churches, for example the Catholic petitioning of Saints, or the Spiritual Baptists going down to mourn. There were also very different personal opinions, for example in interactions with spirit creatures which could be discussed and shared, and on occasions where people were just not sure what they understood. Nevertheless a moral order emerged through these understandings, which was also lived in practice. In contextualising these conceptualizations then, key elements of the local cosmological assemblage can be broadly linked to three areas: responses to changing circumstances, notions of individualism and self-scrutiny, and the wider cultural and historical context of Trinidad. Evangelical Christianity weaved through these also.

A changing world

Elements and contestations of local cosmological understandings, indicated that these had changed over time. Concepts from evangelical Christianity seemed particularly to speak to local community members as these were often drawn on, and were incorporated into already present understandings. Spirits, including malevolent spirits, witchcraft and spirits seeking human incarnation, were all able to be incorporated into evangelical conceptualizations. Evangelical Christianity created a black and white cosmological framework and malevolent spirits and witchcraft could be reinterpreted as devilish practices, possession by spirits as possession by devilish spirits, and positive experiences of spirit manifestation as encounters with the Holy Spirit. The importance of the role of the Holy Spirit fits well into wider understandings of human-spirit, and human-body-spirit relationships, as did understandings of evil spirits. Other cosmological agents, such as spirit creatures,[16] were more ambivalent characters, neither purely good nor bad, and were less easily incorporated into a more evangelical Christian[17] black and white cosmology. This might be why stories relating to these creatures were less spoken of, encounters less frequent, and were reinterpreted or challenged in a way that may not have occurred previously.

Evangelical Christianity was perhaps particularly meaningful as it was able to interpret, explain, and navigate the uncertain and changing world that brought national and international issues into the local arena. That new dangers came from outside, were cross-national issues and the responsibility of states, international organizations and multi-national corporations rather than locally residing spirit creatures, shows a shift in emphasis and conceptualization of risk. Greater risks came from outside and were less controllable, with individual action having less of an effect. Evangelical Christian ideas linked these dangers to the actions of the Devil, but also to the End of Days. They took place under the watchful eye of God, the ultimate power, and therefore such events might be seen as safer and more reassuring if they were part of God's plan. As the

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[16] Spirit creatures were similar to understandings within European folklore such as witchcraft, werewolves and vampires, as well West African religious understandings of natural spirits such as Mami Wata (Littlewood, 1992) and spirits seeking human hosts.

[17] Evangelical Christianity in Trinidad was heavily influenced by the United States of America and particularly by black American churches, as well as other evangelical churches across the Caribbean. The experience and struggles of black Americans in the USA post-slavery were seen as particularly relevant to the experiences of Afro-Trinidadians in Trinidad. Literature produced in the United States for these churches was distributed locally and elements of US American culture where blacks were in strong positions were often commented on, celebrated and held up as examples, such as the talk-show host Oprah Winfrey, music by black American musicians, and the position of prominent black politicians and celebrities, such as Barak Obama. As well as this, there was also a strong Caribbean identity that linked churches in this area to other West Indian islands and experiences, and to wider cultural products from the Caribbean.

individual was unable to deal with such threats, it was of greater importance to build a personal relationship with God the controller, who would protect and guide the individual through such circumstances. This framing also maintained the status quo and did not ask for protest- the individual should not seek to change their circumstances but should rely on God to protect and guide them.

The status quo was also maintained through Wilson's (1973) 'crab antics', the pulling down of more successful community members. Those community members that seemed to be doing better than others, or that were not following other social conventions, could be pulled down through accusations of witchcraft or devil-worship that provided an explanation for their success (and the failure of others). Likewise, individuals such as Jonathan and the other community member who was accused of turning *gombo* did not quite fit into everyday social norms, such as having a female partner and children, and as so could also be accused of immoral practices.

The individual

Cosmological understandings stressed an individual relationship with God, something also promoted by the evangelical churches. A personal relationship with God depended on individual commitment, scrutiny and communication, and therefore intermediaries such as Mary or Saints were less important. This was also the case for pastors who were seen as 'one of us', part of the community, an 'everyman', and unlike priests were not intermediaries on a different spiritual level, or highly educated. Sermons by pastors often stressed these elements and the similarity between the pastor and the congregation. This personal relationship with God also brought in self-scrutiny and a focus on individual morality, leading to punishment or reward as individuals, and their actions, were judged by God.

The importance of individual choice and agency over personal morality and action was also a key element of this cosmological framework. Whether God or the Devil was followed, and how morality was demonstrated through everyday actions, was down to individual freedom of choice, something that was lost or inhibited by spiritual affliction (see Chapter 6). The importance of individual agency was perhaps particularly relevant in a community with a history of slavery and colonialism, where individual freedoms were restricted and agency impeded. It was perhaps not surprising therefore that impeded agency from spiritual affliction should be viewed as a form of punishment.

Trinidad's historical and cultural positioning

The hierarchical setup within both the legions of good and evil spirits may have echoes in the hierarchies of slavery and colonialism. The white Europeans were placed at the top of the hierarchy, while the mixed race offspring of the slave owners were below with slaves at the bottom.[18] Differences in income and living conditions still varied hugely within Trinidad, and white Trinidadians, although not necessarily the most financially well-off, were regarded with higher status and generally had more financial security and social capital than Afro- and Indo-Trinidadians. The hierarchies of spirits and the notion of individual spiritual strength also brought in degrees of spirituality, both humans and spiritual agents embodying these degrees. In the gulf between humanity and divinity, go-betweens are necessary- hierarchies may not only mimic social structure therefore but create a link to an otherwise distant God.

The relationship between spirituality and power was also important in these cosmologies. Spiritual power could create socio-political power and socio-political power was indicative of spiritual power. While there were degrees to spiritual power on the sides of both good and evil, at the highest levels there was a fine line between whether the power welded was for good or evil. Power corrupted and the devil went after God's most loyal servants most vehemently,

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[18] I was also told stories by people locally of hierarchies within groups of slaves, those working in the house being higher up than those in the fields for example, and those women who bore children to the slave owners as higher still.

so even if the individual themselves might be seen to be working for good, no doubt they would be surrounded by many whose power was more nefarious. The changing position of the local area could also be viewed in relation to this- unlike the past, no one locally had great spiritual, or socio-political, power. This also defined the local area negatively through a lack of power and spirituality, stressing the more powerful and special nature of other areas where such power was centered. That the local area was losing out and was ignored by the larger state was a broadly held opinion, and one which again suggested the importance of developing a personal relationship with God. Rather than depending on state-level socio-political power, a relationship with God was more productive and ultimately more powerful. As I was told on a number of occasions, God was the ‘ultimate *obeahman*’.

Links between spirituality and gender was also a feature of Trinidadian religious experiences. Although the majority of the church leaders were men, the majority of church-goers were women. Linking to the female pole of ‘respectability’ in Wilson’s gendered dichotomy (1973), church, and moral governance over the family, was very much constructed as women’s work. At home it was often the women who worked hard to make ends meet, running a household with an absent, or non-permanent, male partner, and women were seen as maintaining and continuing family and society more broadly. Church could provide support in these circumstances but also a reliable, faithful and caring male figure in the form of Jesus. Women’s relationship with Jesus could be very intimate, describing personal attention such as love and kisses from Jesus that no man could offer. These female experiences fit into a wider tradition of eroticised female devotion to Jesus, seen in nuns as the Brides of Christ, Christian mystics such as Hildegarde Von Bingham, Julian of Norwich and Theresa D’Avila. However, as Austin-Broos suggests in her work on Pentecostalists in Jamaica (1997), such devotion may have particular significance where male partners are less reliable or present, Jesus providing male support that is otherwise lacking.

While abstract notions of one church being more holy than another were preached in churches and repeated abstractly by individuals, when it came to specific cases such as friends and neighbours and local, national and international events, more complicated and less denominationally defined cosmological understandings were articulated. Again these were sometimes contradictory and less easily incorporated into a semi-structured cosmology, appearing instead as an amalgam or *bricolage* that hung together, influenced by Caribbean understandings of spirits and spiritual power, the history of Trinidad as former colony, as well as contemporary issues within Trinidad (such as divisions between urban/rural, well-off/less well-off, ethnic differences and the relatively high rates of crime and violence that Trinidad experienced). Through these understandings a moral order emerged, connecting individual morality and wider conceptulizations of spirits, spirit creatures, God, and the Devil, in positions relative to each other. Those attending other churches were embedded within this so that the moral ordering was over-arching and all-inclusive, yet also unfixed, potentially in a state of flux and constantly being reworked and remade.

The cosmological understandings illustrated in this chapter emerged from people's explanations and interpretations of events and practices, being crafted through daily discussions and interactions, as will be examined in more depth in the next chapter. These understandings were elaborated, reinforced and lived through everyday practices so that the cosmological world was part of everyday life. While in this chapter I have somewhat falsely separated understandings from the practices and discussions through which these emerged in order to give a wider overview and background, in forthcoming examinations of elements of this cosmological assemblage, these connections are more visible. In Part II I use a focus on body, health and illness, and success and misfortune more broadly, to look at village cosmology in more depth. However in the next and final chapter of Part I I consider the crafting of understandings and moral orders- how people came to know about the cosmological.

4. Cosmological crafting and story telling

There were three main newspapers available in the village and Wilma, a shopowner, read all of these. She received The Trinidad Express and Newsday each day, and The Trinidad Guardian in addition at the weekend. Having no working television and not being a fan of the radio, these newspapers were Wilma's main source of information about life outside the village, which was supplemented by visitors and conversations with other people. We often discussed the contents of the papers and Wilma read them avidly- news stories were a key topic of conversation both for Wilma and more generally in the village and views would readily be exchanged on the sometimes dramatic incidences of crime and corruption that were reported. Wilma was dismissive of many of the stories- untrusting of government and international initiatives, skeptical of the motivations of politicians and key figures, shocked but unsurprised at the incidences of violent crimes that peppered these papers including stabbings, shootings, men and women being 'chopped' by cutlasses during arguments and women being set alight by their jilted lovers as they sat in a bar or looked after their children. Wilma's view on these incidents, and on many other social problems aligned to many other people's understandings in the village- the individuals in the papers 'muss be possess', they were being led by the Devil to behave in these ways, the Devil influencing their thinking and their actions.

As well as eagerly working her way through newspapers, Wilma was also a key gatherer of local gossip. Not only interested in what she heard, Wilma was someone locally who was recognized to seek out as much information as she could. The local term for this, for someone who 'minds other peoples' business' was a *maco*, and Wilma was recognized in the village as being a great *maco*. This term was pejorative, and implied seeking out information and passing this on in a way that was beyond what was seen as socially appropriate. During my stay I continually heard gossip about people locally, and part of living in the village was that people knew who you were, where you went, and what you did. However to ask people too directly about their actions, or to get close enough to deliberately to hear what was being said, brought accusations of being a *maco*. Many people told me that 'Trini people like to *maco*', an idea picked up and played with by a popular theatre show, 'The Biggest Maco', which was touring during my visit. While knowing was acceptable, asking in too much detail, or seeking to know too much, was disapproved of.

Wilma was certainly not alone in her love for gossip however, and a nearby neighbour was so well known for her passing on of the latest stories that her local nickname was 'Express' after the Trinidadian newspaper. The structure and positioning of local houses meant that hearing what went on within these could be relatively easy. Traditional houses were made of a single thickness of wooden slats, and even those which were brick-built had brickwork with spaces through which air could flow as a way of ventilating the rooms. Doors and windows were often left open, again allowing for ventilation, and back yards were not sectioned off from one another. Many houses also had verandas at the front of the house where people sat in chairs or hammocks. Such structural set-ups meant that often merely by walking past a house, or talking as you walked alongside these, allowed conversations to be overheard. The village was also small and people noticed other people- when I went looking to locate a particular person in a house I had not yet visited, neighbours could usually not only tell me where someone lived but where they were at that particular time. The places (or at least the direction) where I walked in a day and often whom I visited were also frequently repeated back to me by people who had observed me passing, or heard from others that I had passed by.

Not only key in knowing what was going on the in village, gossip also emerged as an important means by which people came to know how to interpret events. In discussions with others in the village, accounts would also be contested, or alternative opinions offered and sometimes there was real relish in relating a tale, as can be seen with Sayeed's earlier account. Like gossip of *gombos*, tales of bad deeds and scandal travelled quickly, and the discussion and interpretation of these was not only of interest to people locally but was also extremely useful for my work. Through gossip and other discussions at a local level, including the interpretation of others' actions, cosmological understandings were crafted.

Maco-ing, scandal and stories

Maco-ing was morally disapproved of, and seen as unchristian. This was reinforced in churches where Pastors asked those attending to look within themselves and their behaviour and ask themselves whether they *maco-ed* too much, as well as whether they were good wives and mothers. These churches usually saw gossiping as a typically female flaw, something that was also generalized in the village. However some I spoke to, particularly younger people, suggested it was actually men who gossiped more than women, for example when they limed on the street. My experiences also suggested that man engaged in gossip at least as much as women, and certainly tended to be more present on roadsides and thus more involved in starting conversations as well as commenting on people who passed by. The layout of the village facilitated these casual conversations with many people sitting outside their houses on verandas facing the street. The green area shaded by mango trees in front of Sayeed's house was a prime place to see what was happening in the village, who came off buses and maxi-taxis as well as whomever was passing through. Sayeed and I (like Sayeed's other friends and relatives) often sat in this spot on plastic chairs, Sayeed calling out to people passing by so that others regularly came to join in our conversations. There were also other spaces in which particular groups of people came together to talk- outside the bar in the centre of the village which was next to a maxi-taxi stop, outside the Community Centre on the steps or in nearby shade, as well as inside the local shops. It was from conversations held in many of these places as well as in more private settings, that my understandings of local cosmological conceptualizations were also formed.

People worried about being the subject of gossip and rumour as although *maco-ing* and gossip were morally disapproved of, these also enforced what was morally acceptable, framing people's practices in a particular moral way and exposing right and wrong. While the term 'gossip' might be seen perjoratively as a particular type of less-important discourse than discussions on politics, economics and kinship- those classic areas of anthropological investigation- I conceptualize it here as a serious way through which moral order and wider understandings of the world were crafted and become known, no less valuable or relevant than other subjects of conversation.

Scandals and gossip[1] exposed contradictions, so that the best foci of gossip were those who were higher status- as I heard locally, 'the higher monkey climb, the more he expose heself'. The actions of those who proudly held themselves up to high moral standards, such as pastors, priests and church elders, were also subject to particular scrutiny. Gossip referring to just about any Seventh Day Adventist was well-received and enjoyed. Gossip and the circulation of stories could be detrimental to a person's reputation or respectability, and Wilson links gossip to his understanding of Crab Antics (1973), such talk positioning people on these poles. Pulling others down through gossip and questioning their moral positioning was part of this, as well as accounting for why particular individuals were doing better than others. Gossip was seen to operate in a similar way by Haviland in Zinacantan where he viewed gossip as a competitive tool in a context where people saw themselves as in competition with others and where gossip could be used as a form of self-protection (1977b, p187). For Haviland, 'Gossip trades, then, on a separation between public and private information: it celebrates leakage from one domain into the other' (1977b, p188), although from my experience in the

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[1] Retaining the term 'gossip' to link this form of talk to morality and social values also allow me to link this to earlier anthropologists on the subject, however again I do not mean to imply that this talk is any less important than any other at a local level. The understanding of a category of talk which constituted 'gossip' was also used at an emic level, however usually in a pejorative sense.

village, public and private domains were not always clearly distinguished. Rather however, such gossiping brought out and situated people on a wider moral order, and was particularly enjoyable when it suggested that a person's position might not be what it first seemed or what they sought to portray.

Social rules were reinforced by invoking these in gossip, for example in the accusations of Jonathan being a *gombo*. This was not merely a form of social control but suggested the moral value of particular actions and ensured people followed particular social or cultural norms (Haviland, 1977b, p191). Gossip as a political tool can be seen in anthropological literature more broadly, Gluckman (1963a) for example seeing the function of gossip as maintaining the unity of social groups and as a way of emphasizing the boundary between morally acceptable and deviant actions which controlled dissents without direct confrontation. Paine (1967) saw gossip instead as a tool that individuals could use for their own agendas and to undermine other people. In the local context both of these proposals could fit in relation to gossip and moral values. Gossip and rumours were also particularly powerful for understanding the underhand workings of the Devil which were not always necessarily revealed clearly at first glance. Individual morality of local people was not always a central feature to all gossip, and other actors in the moral order could also be brought in and discussed, including governments, scientists and national and international organizations. Such stories asserted morality and social values not as static and abstract issues but as lived through practices.

Locally, Trinidad termed itself a 'gossip society', as was suggested by a generally popular Trinidadian government minister in a presentation I saw her give. Perhaps because gossip played such a role in reinforcing morality and moral order, and Trinidad was a religious and religiously orientated culture where morality and moral order were so focused upon, talk classed as 'gossip' formed a key part of everyday life. This also meant that gossip and scandel were useful ethnographic tools in Trinidad, in particular when looking at moral order. Tales of gossip and scandal can be compared to Garfinkel's (1991

[1967]) famous breaching experiments[2] where breaching social norms helped reveal the norms themselves. Through hearing about what was viewed as scandalous or worthy of gossip therefore, I, like others in the village, was able to establish what was seen as more ‘normal’ and socially acceptable behaviour.[3]

Truths and lesser truths

Rumours and gossip travelled, but not always reliably. I was told by Wilma that it was a shame that Lucie was not about for me to speak to as she would have been an excellent source of information. She told me that Lucie had just died, and there were complications in relation to her funeral as she had relatives who had to come back from the States before she was buried and they were working in the USA without visas so would be unable to return afterwards. Her funeral was being held off until the practicalities around this were decided, should all relatives return or would it just be some? I later saw Sayeed and mentioned that I’d heard that Lucie had died. Sayeed had not yet heard this but by the time I saw him later in the day as I headed to the Community Centre, he had also now heard this from someone else and was pondering about Lucie’s relatives and when the funeral would be held. Later still it emerged that Lucie had not in fact died, although she had been ill- and I did actually end up speaking to her. Sayeed’s and other people’s explanation for this unreliable information was that as a way of teasing people, and also exposing their *maco-ing* nature, people in the village would also deliberately make up gossip that would be told to *macos* so that they would make a fool of themselves in repeating this and their *maco-ing* tendencies would be revealed.[4] Sayeed was proud to say that he also made

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[2] Also seen more recently in Katie Fox’s ‘Watching the English’, 2005.

[3] Haviland notes in his 1977 work ‘Gossip, Reputation and Knowledge in Zinacantan’ that there is real value in the subject of gossip for grasping cultural competence in that ability to gossip requires real comprehension of rules, contexts and ‘metarules’, as this requires a degree of intimacy with interlocutors. For Haviland, understanding gossip meant understanding a culture (1977a).

[4] In this case of course, I was also partly responsible for spreading gossip, and I did indeed feel foolish when it was revealed to be untrue.

up and spread rumours that were not true to expose how ridiculously quickly they spread and were embellished.

On a number of occasions I experienced Sayeed playing the 'trickster'[5] role in his interactions with people as well as in relaying stories to others, particularly those he viewed as *macos*. Sayeed proudly told me of various 'great wind-ups' which he had played on others in the village as he became annoyed with the amount of gossiping that went on. Sayeed indicated the store opposite and told me of the time he and a friend passed on to someone who was known to be a giant *maco* that the owner of the shop had died. This was believable, apparently, as the owner had recently been ill (as was the case with Lucie). This crucial information was imparted at the bus stops near to the West of the village on the way out, and by the time that Sayeed had made it to his home in the centre of the village, people were coming to him to tell him this rumour. Sayeed was then able to ask the shopkeeper to reveal herself to prove that she was in fact not dead, and that this demonstrated the unquestioning belief that people in the village had in each other's gossip. The prevalence and importance placed on gossip and rumours was therefore also played about with as a notion. It could also therefore be difficult to distinguish whether the stories that people heard and told might be seen as gossip, rumour or tales. Some people also talked about their own experience, as occurred for example when Cherise described her experience of *gombo* attack, and newspaper stories and tales about people in positions of power would also be shared in these spaces. Through my time in the field I came to see these, and other accounts, as stories of differing kinds relating to circumstances which may or may not have occurred but which were often the starting point for wider discussions of cosmological understandings.

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[5] The 'trickster' is a role familiar to Trinidadian society, visible in calypsos and in stories and is exemplified in the character of Anansi (also Anansi-spider) who Erikson describes as 'the trickster of West African folklore, famous for getting the upper hand against larger and stronger adversaries through creativity, humour and imagination' (2013, p14).

Sometimes the person relaying the story might be seen as particularly unreliable or others hearing the story would disclose that they had heard better. While some tales that were spread were made up, others were elaborated, misunderstood or unknown parts of the story were filled in. On one occasion, I passed Sayeed as I headed out on my daily travels and he told me that he had just seen two nurses pass by, one for a mother and one for a daughter who had both died from AIDS at the same time in a village further up the coast. Another local man passed us as we talked and joined the conversation, saying that the pair did not die from AIDS but from an accident. I headed on my way to meet someone at the Community Centre where there was a group of people also talking about this. This group understood that the mother and daughter had been shot. They lived in the East-West Corridor but were from the village further up the road so were being buried up there. Sally, one of the members of the group, went on to say that these deaths also had not been counted on the official murder tally[6] being kept for the year in the papers, so these also had to be added on. Through the different versions of this story, different causes to the deaths were brought in, which in the last case, also related to wider understandings of what was happening in Trinidad more broadly and to disapproval of government approaches and fear of crime. Stories about the local area thus brought in wider concerns- they were not single stories about individual morality but could also comment on the wider moral order and framework in which they occurred. Stories could therefore reinforce and bring into being moral and cosmological understandings, giving explanation and interpretation to occurrences, and placing them within a wider moral framework.

Stories, including gossip and rumour, were also therefore a starting point for discussion, refutation and contestation, as well as conversations from which wider interpretations and understandings of the world would be drawn. Telling, retelling and interpreting stories were ways of knowing, and like other stories

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[6] Much of my fieldwork took place in the run up to the State of Emergency (August 2012-December 2012), when crime was seen as getting increasingly high. Newspapers at this time drew up and maintained a tally of the number of people murdered that year so far to draw attention to the increasing violence and lack of containment and prosecution by police.

and interpretations of events, were co-created between people in interactions. White suggests that the purpose of gossip and rumour is not to deliver information but to discuss it; ‘Rumour is the product of ambiguous situations: rumour resolves contradictions; they explain not only misfortune but good fortune’ (2000, p81). Drawing on Ginzburg’s example of tales of 16th century withcraft, White recalls ‘These stories, even when told with all the conventions and constraints of heresay, were not all received and heard in the same way. Not everyone believed these stories, or believed them all the time, or believed every version a neighbour or acquaintance repeated’ (2000, p41). Stories created debate and were evaluated. Contradictions within stories and their apparent truth, do not trouble White in her examination of vampire stories. Instead she moves past the issue of validity to see the stories as commentaries on social relations. These stories are ‘neither true nor false, in the sense that they do not have to be proven beyond their being talked about; but as they are told, they contain different empirical elements that carry different weights: stories are told with truths, commentaries, and statements of ignorance’ (White, 2000). Through telling such stories and locating these in time and space and linked with other stories, new connections and relationships could be seen, and the local could be connected to more global concerns (White, 2000; Geissler & Pool, 2005). Whether such events actually took place therefore, was not the point, but it was the clashes, gaps and issues that the telling exposed that were more of interest, as White adds: ‘Stories and rumours are produced in the cultural conflicts of local life, they mark ways to talk about the conflicts and contradictions that gave them meaning and power’ (White, 2000 p312). They were ways of talking about, finding meaning in and coming to know about the world, and I too saw these as wider commentaries on relationships, values and morality as well as opportunities for people to classify and come to conclusions about these. As God communicated through people’s actions and through events, discussion was also a means through which an understanding of God’s actions could take place.

Confidentiality

Given the prevalence and importance of gossip in the village, confidentiality was voiced to me as a real concern locally. I was aware that particular information was kept within certain groups, for example within households, families, churches (or groups within churches). Scandals, such as cases of incest,[7] were often said to be known about within households and families, getting out to the rest of the village when a family member told someone else, for example a schoolteacher or neighbour. Given the negative position of *macos* in the village, it was perhaps unsurprising that keeping things confidential was equated with a higher moral positioning. For example the spiritually strong pastor of the Independent International Baptist Church, was seen to keep confidentialities which perhaps also contributed to his relatively high moral status. The fear of not keeping health problems confidential was mentioned to me many times when I asked about using health services not based in the local area. Many people, such as Judith who accompanied her husband to a church well-known for its healing services in the East-West Corridor, told me this was a key reason why they had sought help from outside the village. As well as the appeal of the Pastor's healing ability in this church, Judith and her family left the village as they did not want the details of her husband's illness, nor the different sources of treatment they had sought (and different success and failures of these) to become wider knowledge. The moral assumptions and implications around illnesses probably added to this, as well as moral judgments around the healing sources that might be sought out following the failures of biomedical, bush and Christian healing treatments. Treatment from other spiritual specialists were viewed as *obeah* or devil-worship by others in the village but might be turned to by the afflicted if other healing options had been exhausted.

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[7] Incest was used as a term for sexual abuse, usually of teenage girls, by family members, extended family or the friends or partners of family members. This was viewed disapprovingly locally and there were charities across Trinidad that sought to combat such abuse.

Coming to know through church discourses and practices

As noted by a number of authors, different epistemic communities have different understandings and questions about the information they rely on, and look for different forms of evidence (e.g. Fausto, 2002; Latour and Woolgar, 1979; Nelson, 1993; Barth, 2002; Kirmayer, 2012). Various sources of information were drawn upon in the village to understand the cosmological. Stories from individuals as well as from newspapers, television and radio were key ways that people came to know what was happening in their community and in the world more broadly. These formed the basis for wider interpretations, but churches and religious literature also passed on such information together with more religiously embedded cosmological understandings.

Hymns, Bible study, the structure of services and testimonials were all means through which cosmological understandings were reinforced in churches. This was done most clearly in the evangelical churches in sermons where pastors would guide, give advice to and reprimand their flock (including Seventh Day Adventist church providing guidance about how to dress to be respected and how to express oneself confidently in a job interview). Mostly however, guidance was given on how to live, how to behave, how to interpret experiences, the role of God and the individual’s role in forming a relationship with God. These were often illustrated through Bible stories, for example the story of Job. Other stories and themes that were commonly talked through in church services included: putting faith in God and taking troubles to Jesus the great healer, God’s divine judgment and justness, the Devil as tempting and trying to trick, Jesus’ sacrifice for the redemption of mankind, cases of spirit possession and exorcism that were cured by Jesus, the biblical notion that ‘the last shall be first and the first shall be last’, and in the Pentecostal church in particular there was a focus in the Book of Revelation and what would happen to people who were saved and not saved in the End of Days. (victoriously riding white horses and fighting by Jesus’ side, and drowning in rivers of their own blood, respectively).[8] These concepts seemed to speak to people locally, and had particular salience and connection to their lives. Through these stories God was constructed as recognizing how hard it was to live in current circumstances, and as providing comfort, solutions and healing. God was also constructed as a judge and just punisher for those *bandits* who could not be caught by the police, while the Devil caused the problems themselves. Within the telling of these stories came the notion that success in this life far from guaranteed success in the next, as current successes might be based on devilish means. Descriptions of heaven were also given, and were seen to provide a wonderful reward for the suffering being experienced in this world. Such examples therefore not only contributed to the setting up of a moral order and positions within this, but also demonstrated notions of divine justice.

These stories were far less common in Catholic services. In these services readings were more formal, there was little interaction between the priest (or nun when there was no priest available) taking the service, and the congregation- other than those who came up to give Bible readings (who were always one of the same small group of people). Readings followed the liturgical calendar and were the same throughout Trinidad, and sermons often focused on Trinidad as a state, rather than the local circumstances of the village. These sermons might be based around announcements made by the Archbishop about Trinidad and Catholicism in the Caribbean, why tradition and structure were important, and why it was important not to have female priests and the role of women in the family. These reinforced particularly Catholic understandings that stressed notions of ‘tradition’ and connection to the rest of the island. They were usually less emotional and less specific to the locality and to individuals in the congregation than those found in the Pentecostal, Independent Baptist, Adventist and Evangelical churches. They tended to be pitched as more intellectual arguments, considered and with ‘tradition’ as a guiding factor, again in contrast to those from these other churches which might

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[8] This was why it was (officially) important to make sure friends and family were saved, although as noted earlier, the missionizing fervour expressed within these churches did not necessarily continue outside them.

include more recent interpretations and discoveries relating to the Bible and biblical times. Those attending the Catholic church included those better positioned in the village so the stories and accounts in other churches might have spoken more, and been more appealing to those in the village who found themselves in more precarious circumstances. The difference in congregation participation from those attending Catholic services and those attending Adventist or Pentecostal services was also particularly striking. Through the use of testimonials spoken during services and in prayer meetings by those attending these latter churches, many more in the congregation could actively participate, relating their own experiences rather than potentially struggling to read a lesson which may have little connection to their own circumstances. Testimonies could be spoken by anyone, and frequently it was women who did so, in opposition to the male pastors who otherwise led the sermons.

Testimonials that made explicit the means through which God worked on an individual's everyday life were encouraged and occurred in almost every service I attended in the Seventh Day Adventist, Pentecostal and Evangelical churches. Often it was the same individuals who felt moved to speak about their experiences, and they were often very eloquent in telling their stories. These testimonies could be emotional also, as the individual re-lived or recounted their problems to the audience, even in a way that could be construed as therapeutic. Presenting problems, particularly those where elements were still unresolved, was a way of sharing people's personal circumstances and gaining the attention and aid of others. These were also accounts of how people had made sense of their changing circumstances and had found God's hand in an otherwise chaotic situation- reinforcing the notion of God as working on an everyday basis. Some people were more willing to share their experiences than others, and when calls in church services were made for examples of how God had worked in the lives of the congregation, there were some people who could be relied on to share something. Typically the format of such narratives was as follows: the individual was in a state of loss, for example in terms of a direction or a decision they had to make, or materially through a shortage of food or money to pay the rent, or even having mislaid an item that they needed; the individual prayed, or spoke to God or Jesus about this problem; God, or the Holy Spirit then provided a solution either directly, or through directing others. God was presented as acting for the affected individual because of their good relationship, so that giving testimonies was also a way of visibly enacting personal morality and positioning. In these stories, God did not forsake the teller even the smallest item, although not every aspect in the account was always fully resolved. These often retained an element of mystery; God's message, or solution, was not always clear but always intended, and the faithful's problems were always attended to, even if they were not completely alleviated.

Like Bible stories, testimonials were repeated outside the churches in conversation with others in the community, and allowed action and reinterpretation of events. When expressed through an evangelical Christian idiom, interpretations of such experiences were rarely contested, at least publically, although such expressions were more usually made to those who were sympathetic to this approach. I occasionally heard people privately suggest that the cause of someone's loss or distress was down to their own action and that 'God helps those who help heself'. Just looking to God for a solution was no enough and individual effort was also required.

Dilley (2010) notes that the importance of individual learning and study is stressed in Christianity and seeking individual understanding of the spiritual through personal study and experience was also seen as key on a local level. Many people placed an emphasis on Bible study, 'making study' of particular aspects of the faith that were important to them or they were particularly interested in. This might come from Christian study books as well as international publications produced by churches such as the 'The Watchtower' produced by the Jehovah's Witnesses. A Catholic newspaper produced for all of Trinidad was available locally and the Independent International Baptist Church also distributed its own newsletter. However it was the often glossy, colourful and more evangelical in approach, international booklets that were more visible in households, whichever church people attended.[9]

As God (or the Devil) also spoke to individuals directly, or communicated through others to pass on knowledge, knowing about the cosmological world could come from God himself. Dreams and visions were ways in which God and the Devil communicated, as well as through other signs and personal experiences, and the experiences of others were used as a basis for understanding. Since both God and the Devil could communicate with the individual through dreams, visions etc., I asked how people could distinguish who was communicating. People described knowing things to be true because they came from God, that God speaks the truth, that if the individual was being asked to do anything bad it must come from the Devil and not God. Others described that they 'just knew' or the 'dog knows his master's voice' or similarly, 'the sheep know the voice of the shepherd'. In terms of these spiritual understandings, and also in relation to some understandings of healing, these ways of knowing came through feelings and a sense of knowing through the body and not merely cognitively. As will be explored in more depth in later chapters, individuals described being guided by the Holy Spirit, emotional aspects of services and feeling the presence of God, so that knowing emerged too through bodily experiences.

Contesting, elaborating, interpreting

Experiences, including spiritual experiences, were discussed and made sense of at a local level. Sometimes an individual was looking for how such an event

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[9] The general importance of learning and biblical study also marked my position- I was viewed as a student learning about the local area (knowledge that it was reasonable that I did not have, not coming from Trinidad) and who had studied abroad at universities that were better regarded than those in Trinidad (as things from the outside were generally viewed as better than those developed within Trinidad). However I also visibly knew so little about the Bible and Christianity, something seen as strange for someone in my position whose perceived knowledge and education suggested a better familiarity with this.

could be interpreted, and might seek out someone who was known to be able to understand this. Joy, a member of the Pentecostal church was known by some people[10] to have the gift of dream interpretation and therefore she was sought out for this reason. Because of her gift, Joy was also able to give useful interpretations of other events that may have happened to a person, although some felt they could draw their own conclusions. For example, someone might give an account of running into a spirit or *jumbie* on the road at night. Others listening, or talking about it later, may view this as a run-in with a devilish spirit, while for someone else it was a figment of the individual's imagination, 'the wind' or some other aspect of nature that had been mistaken for an encounter with the spirit realm. Among such conversations, people might also raise the question of why the individual had been wandering along the road at night.

Another example of these differing interpretations occurred when a story emerged that a woman in the next village said she had had a 'spirit lash' that had pushed her to the ground while she was outside the door of her house one night, during which time she had lost her bracelet. I heard various discussions of this event, and different contestations:

1. Someone had sent a spirit on her, who had done this? Perhaps a jealous neighbour who wanted her bracelet?
2. Her son was no good, he probably took her bracelet and she had just slipped over in the dark.
3. She often had problems with evil spirits, did she do something to attract them perhaps?
4. The biggest spirit she had a problem with was alcohol, she was always drunk and she probably drunkenly lost her bracelet and did not want to admit to this.
5. What was she doing going out late at night in the first place? She must have been up to something no-good, *obeah*, or perhaps meeting a lover.

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[10] Joy's ability was known particularly by those within the Pentecostal church, although she told me that not everyone in the church knew of it. A few other people in the village, including close friends and family members were also aware of her gift and asked her to interpret their dreams.

These differing interpretations of the same event were not unusual, and not necessarily contradictory. They illustrated a range of ideas that came to the fore as explanations of experiences- the presence of the Devil, young people committing crimes, jealous neighbours, and blame of the person involved themselves (including a desire to pass this blame on to others/the spirit world). As with the testimonies given in church, sometimes God and the Devil seemed to be included in the wider frame of the situation, as a form of interpretation, rather than being integral to the story. An example of this also came from a nun I met in Port of Spain. She had burned her hand cooking one day, but later heard that the story going around following this was that the Devil had pushed her into the fire. She herself rejected this interpretation, saying that people ‘saw the Devil’ in everything nowadays, and certainly some people locally could be relied on to place a similar interpretation on whatever story was being told. Everyone could agree however, that God knew and saw all, so that only God, and the woman herself, knew the ‘truth’ of the circumstances around the loss of her bracelet, whatever anyone else said.

Some spiritual experiences and explanations were explicitly passed on by older people in the village to others around them. Older people were understood to have better knowledge of the old ways which could be important in such explanations, and they also passed on crucial knowledge about agriculture, cooking and bush medicine. Many older people I spoke to in the village suggested that their understandings were not always ‘taken on’ by younger people, these were not listened to and abided by. The younger people I spoke to suggested that much of this information was now not relevant, did not connect to what they understood from school or were ‘nancy stories’ with no basis in fact. Some people, both older and younger, gave explanations about the world that drew on more scientific understandings to elaborate and further contextualize understandings they had heard elsewhere. Raymond, a village resident in his eighties was one example of this. He told me that he had heard from his grandmother that bush for medicine should not be picked after 6pm (a common understanding), something that made more sense to Raymond when he learned at school that 'foul air carbon dioxide' was let out from plants at around this time. Raymond went on to tell me about his understandings of the impact of carbon dioxide on the local area and more broadly in contemporary times, understandings he had learned from school and from the news:

> The Almighty Dollar make[s man make] motorcar, [they] know carbon dioxide kills men but does it anyway, we are all trapped in it [in this reliance on cars and carbon dioxide]. Same gas causes climate change and hole in ozone layer. Oil and gas, we so embedded [in the use of it] we can'[t] get out. All people making motorcar never looked for different [alternative sources of] fuel. Make fertilizer out of same oil [as motor cars use] so [it is] not spread on crops [as it is being used by cars], why nothing can grow in [and around the village] today...[They are] Draining the oil from the ground [which is] needed for tree roots. Bleeding the ground takes liquid, leave a hole where oil was. No country can base [their] economy on that' (Nov, 2011)

As mentioned previously, one of Trinidad's main exports was oil, so in this explanation, Raymond was also linking climate change and criticism of the Trinidadian government in suggesting that the government was wrong to base Trinidad's economy on oil for cars largely used outside of the country. Furthermore, Raymond was suggesting that oil production had taken over in importance from agriculture (the main export in colonial times) in an irreparable way. Raymond continued; 'Air ignite diesel, alternative energy is air, they could make fuel from that air, sweetheart….Air that you breathe has electricity in, you breathe so everybody have electricity in them- plants, animals, all have through air…when you go through electric doors, why do they open for you?' - I responded that this I understood that it was because they had sensors –

> It is the electricity it is sensing, sweetheart. Oil industry is like agriculture now, can't go back easily now, things take years to

> produce, if plants now won't bear instantly…oil running short, where will the economy come from? We coming back poor [in the future we will be poor].

For Raymond, Trinidad would be poor again after the oil ran out, like it was before oil was found- Trinidad's reliance on the wealth from oil was placing it in a precarious position. Raymond's understandings of some of the instability of the State were therefore drawn on his understandings of carbon dioxide and climate change, moral understandings of motivation of the government and industry based outside Trinidad, to understandings he could link also to a better time in the colonial period, and to his grandmother's advice about picking bush medicine. These different concepts of the world did not exist in different silos therefore, but drew on each other to develop wider understandings of the world.

Stories were not necessarily accepted unquestioningly. Encounters with spirit creatures were perhaps some of the most widely contested stories, meetings with *gombos* less so- certainly everyone knew who the local *gombos* were. To some extent however all experiences were accepted, although some were shared more in some company than in others. Differences in interpretation were not necessarily clear-cut by church affiliation, age, gender, or educational level, although these sometimes appeared to play a part. The tradition of joking and poking fun at others in the area, of being a 'trickster' meant that such encounters could be told as 'jokes' or provocation to a particular person to get them to react in a certain way- and the more that they insisted on their interpretation over others, the funnier this became. Other stories about what had happened to people, or news-stories, were also often shared and discussed in a similar manner to people's own experiences. Again, news stories were frequently seen as the starting point for interpretation: what the papers had missed out; what other people knew to be true, or competing versions of a story; or how these stories related to other events. Given that there were times that I noted two competing newspapers could report the same story very differently, that supposed key elements of a story may disappear from later reports in the same newspapers and occasionally retractions were printed, and that corruption and hypocrisy appeared to be the basis of many stories that were then forgotten about, it was perhaps not a surprise that these stories appeared to be so open to interpretation.

It was rare that people had actually been present at the events they were discussing, whichever interpretation put forwards. However through discussion and interpretation of these, often ambiguous events could be linked to a wider framework which all saw as being 'true'.[11] Different individual interpretations might draw on the same wider frameworks, even if these were elaborated differently. As noted in the previous chapter, personal understandings of aspects of the specifics of this framework could differ and could also be inconsistent and changing. While some elements of these cosmological assemblages appeared fixed- such as the understanding of good and evil and the tensions and relationships between the two and that God, the Devil and other spirits were all around and had the potential to act on the individual- others aspects were more open to interpretation. In looking for and describing interpretations, individuals might still be working out or crafting for themselves what they understood to be the case.

The importance of knowing about not knowing

Authors such as Last (1981), Hobart (1993), Chua (2009) and Dilley (2010) remind us of the importance of ignorance in anthropology, that not-knowing can

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[11] This can be linked to Fausto's discussion of different forms and standards of evidence drawn on by different epistemic communities (2002). Fausto quotes Haack to consider differences in interpretation within communities themselves. Haack suggests that for individuals, evidence presented is assessed as to '…its fit to their experience and to their other beliefs…If we think of criteria of justification at the appropriate level of generality, of framework principals rather than material content, of the constraints of experiential anchoring and explanatory integration rather than of specific judgments of relevance, there may, after all, be commonality rather than divergence' (Haack, Evidence and inquiry: towards reconstruction in epistemology, 1993, p207, cited in Fausto, 2002, p687).

be as significant as knowing, and so I turn to consider some of ways in which things were not known in the village and their significances. Last's well-known paper on not-knowing (1981) suggests that this area can be difficult for anthropologists to examine given that discovering about knowing itself is hard enough. However he, like Dilley, argues that not-knowing about something is part of the construction of knowing; 'Ignorance is not a simple absence, a plain lack of knowing. It is an absence that has effects in terms of what is construed as knowledge, and of what social relations of learning are established in order to address the consequences of absence' (Dilley, 2010, pS188). Not-knowing can be part of the construction of knowing therefore and can tie into concepts of learning, how something might be learned and who by. Knowing about particular areas such as bush medicine, the Bible and Christianity, fishing and agricultural practices were seen as specializations but ones that were potentially open to all to learn.

While some people were recognised as being particularly knowledgeable about spiritual matters, knowing about Christianity, the Bible and the spiritual realm were seen as important information for people to come to know for themselves. Seeking knowledge as part of being a good Christian is stressed by authors such as Dilley (2010),[12] and people locally distinguished between those ignorant of God because they never heard The Word, and those who chose not to listen who were seen to be willfully ignorant. Given the background of Christianity in the local area as well as the number of different churches, people could be seen as either- knowing because there had always been Christianity in the area but also not-knowing as some of the knowledge brought came from new churches, such as the Pentecostal church, which those who did not attend that church may not be aware of. Discussions about personal experiences and communications with God, other people's experiences and Bible stories could be shared also to pass on information in order to convert. However some

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[12] The importance of The Word in passing on knowledge in Christianity as well as personal experiences of God are of course important aspects to Christian faith, but the notion of gaining knowledge can also have other and more negative implications, for example subsequent to the innocence in the Garden of Eden before knowledge was gained in The Fall.

abilities were seen as inherited or gained from birth or God. As well as particular spiritual gifts being given from God, such as being able to interpret dreams or to heal, ability at school and in sports were thought to be passed on by parents. This was not because these children would learn from their parents but rather that they had inherited an innate ability so that if a child had parents who were good at school or at sports, their children would be good at school or at sports because they were born with that ability.

Belonging to particular groups indicated probable knowledge about particular field. For example being an older member of the village implied a degree of knowledge about bush medicine, being a member of the Spiritual Baptist church (and particularly the Mother of this church who is typically involved in its leadership), implied knowledge of types of healing associated with Spiritual Baptists, being a fisherman implied a knowledge of *obeah*. Gaps in knowing about areas that could be linked to these specializations also revealed aspects of cosmology. For example, most local fishermen did not know how to swim. In their experience, there was no point in learning to do so as the sea was strong, unpredictable and followed her own intentions; if the sea wanted to take you, she would take you, it was better to accept this and not to put up a fight.

Some people were recognized as having particular knowledge in an area, for example in healing, while others were seen as not being as knowledgable as they thought they were. For example someone who worked for a charity encouraged local people to make craft items to sell to tourists in other part of the island. However none of these items sold as they were priced at an extremely high price. The wider understanding from within the village was that this was a man from outside who thought he knew about the area but whose mistake displayed his ignorance. Here being ignorant[13] was also connected to being an outsider. Getting local knowledge wrong was also significant in this aspect such as not knowing the relationships and connections between families

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[13] It should also be noted that the term 'ignorant' was used emically to mean stupid, badly-behaved and stubborn-headed rather than someone who was not knowledgeable about something, and so I use it etically in this context.

and not knowing that a given name and local nickname referred to the same person. This was insider knowledge and marked a difference between those from the village and outsiders who were not familiar with such information- indeed it could take a long time to get to know these details. There were people in the village who were sought out for advice by outsiders but less so by members of the community, such as Paula who had advised different organizations and was regularly asked for by visitors to the area for her bush medicine products- however she was not usually named or locally asked for advice so broadly. There were other people in the village who could not read, write or identify numbers (knowing the differences between different coins and notes through their size and colour), but who kept their inability to do this well-guarded. This was not unusual among the fishermen and was something which those who worked with the fisherman had learned to cater to without revealing or embarrassing those fishermen who were illiterate.

This leads onto a discussion of *refusing to take notice of information* as different to ignorance. In community and interpersonal discussions, some people refused to listen to particular information, particularly contradictory information or shut their ears to this. This could be because they disagreed with what was being communicated because they did not think it had actually occurred or, more commonly, that the interpretation of this was wrong. Such discussions may also hold little interest for them, they did not want to know because they were not interested. This could be seen for example in the discussion between Theresa and her husband below which I was also party to. Theresa’s husband, Bruno, was talking about meteorites as one was reported in the newspapers to have passed only 200 miles away from earth on the Tuesday beforehand. Theresa said that she did not know what a meteorite was and Bruno tried to explain;

> Bruno: It’s a rock passing in the sky
> Theresa: What rock passing in the sky? You tell me about a rock on the ground, a rock in the stream, a rock just so, but don’t tell me ‘bout a rock in the sky, tell me ‘bout something real.

> Bruno: It is a bit of planet.
>
> Theresa: What is planet?
>
> Bruno: Don't know
>
> Theresa: [shrugging] Scientists are mad. All mad they think they understand God's plan, only God understands God's plan.

For Theresa, meteorites were not within her immediate grasp of existing understandings nor were of particular interest. Like many other matters, she was happy to leave some matters to the knowledge of God who knew far better than any person. This was her more fundamental understanding: that God know all and knew best and that she could trust and have faith in God and therefore did not need to necessarily understand everything in the world.

People might also deliberately not learn, or acknowledge that they knew about certain understandings and practices. Hobart stresses the moral judgments that accompany the attribution of ignorance to others (1993) some of which are demonstrated above. However in the case of the village, there could be positive moral elements to both knowing and not knowing. Revealing too much of an understanding about *obeah* for example, suggested a familiarity that only those undertaking such practices would have. As Dilley noted of witchcraft (2010, pS184), to know too much suggested that the individual practiced *obeah* and could therefore bring accusations. The workings of *obeah* practitioners were not widely known anyway as *obeah* work might therefore be more easily undone by others if the method became wider knowledge, plus an *obeahman/woman* wanted to charge for their services. Secret knowledge was also attributed to members of the Spiritual Baptist church who acquired personal knowledge that was not shared through the process of going down to mourn (Laitenen, 2002) and to the lodges that used to be based in the area. Lodge practices in particular were viewed as shrouded in secrecy, passwords being required to enter lodges and secret spiritual knowledge being passed on and in need of such protection that it was thought that lodge members had their tongues cut out after death so that they could not tell lodge secrets in the afterlife. The inability of women to keep secrets was also given as a reason for women to be excluded from lodges by Herskovits and Herskovits (1947). These cases where knowledge was kept secret- in lodges, in *obeah*, and in Spiritual Baptist mourning, all had an immoral aspect so that secret knowledge was connected to devilish, or at least immoral, practices. However there were also aspects of healing practices and local recipes that were not revealed to others, for example by those who sold these to people, or feared they would be used in products produced for sale.

Harrison (1995) notes that a distinction can be made between seeing knowledge as scarce resource and therefore keeping it secret to maintain its value (e.g. cult initiates who cannot share the knowledge they acquire through and after initiation) and that passing on knowledge is how its value is accrued (e.g. in expert systems that emphasise teaching). In reality however, Harrison suggests that there is often mixture of both approaches and that there can be tensions between these which raise questions about who owns knowledge and how this can be protected. This could also be seen on a local level; while secrecy around certain (particularly spiritual) practices were seen as suggesting devilish involvement, perception of local competition meant that in reality not all knowledge was shared, and while those who were *macos* and sought to find out gossip were not viewed positively, information passed on by *macos* was headed and passed on and was a way in which contradictions and hypocritical behaviour were exposed.

The work of anthropologists also suggests other important forms of not-knowing in terms of: forgetting (Connerton, 2008); forgetting and an inability to articulate (Vitebsky, 2008); silences as being meaningful in themselves (Foucault, 1980); and claiming not to know as illustrative of respecting particular knowledge (Chua, 2009). Some or all of these may be relevant in local recollections of the past where the *ol'time* was contrasted positively with the present, with little mention of the time immediately following Independence apart from in negative terms. Miller (1991, 1994) suggests that Trinidadian concepts of time are heavily influenced by an underlying understanding of a lack of roots, and that

Trinidadians instead focus on transcendence and transience. Austin-Broos' (1997) work among Pentecostals in Jamaica stresses the appeal that Pentecostalism has in linking slavery and sin and a movement beyond this to emancipation and salvation. In the village however there was less of a focus on transcendence and transience, and while there was some focus on salvation, this was not linked to emancipation. Instead the focus was on surviving in daily life and the coming End of Days which the world was seen to be entering. Perhaps because a pragmatic approach was seen as most important for dealing with and understanding the current situation, these concerns became a greater focus. The *ol'time* became a useful comparison to current times and current maintenance over body and morality were important in negotiating and surviving everyday life. Both of these time frames set up a moral order visible in the here and now and were reinforced and lived in practices.

Doing knowing

Stories, be they biblical, personal experiences and testimonies, news stories, gossip or scandal were therefore key ways through which morality was understood and lived in everyday life. Through telling, retelling, elaborating, challenging and interpretating, knowledge about the cosmological was made-crafted through discussion and practices by individuals alone or with others. Trinidad's oral tradition suggests that discussion and story telling can also be fitted into wider cultural practices. In previous time calypsos relaying social and political commentary were more of an active part of everyday life, and while the calypso tradition was still present at Carnival in other parts of Trinidad, this has been seen as less of a dominant form of expression than it once was.[14] The local radio station occasionally played old calypso tracks, and some famous lyrics from these were occasionally repeated, such as 'don't hang your hat where your hand can't reach', but like many other aspects of *ol'time* life, calypso

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[14] The story telling of Trinidadian Paul Keen-Douglas was also not referred to locally, although people I met outside of the area were more familiar with this.

locally was seen to have *run trou.*[15] In Trinidad more generally, words were seen to have power. Like Austin's 'performative utterings' and speech acts (1975 [1955]), saying negative things were thought to bring these into existence, for example saying it was going to rain would bring the rain, and saying negative things about a person was to put *goat mout* on them- these negative things that had been spoken about would then happen to them. Saying words as part of *obeah* made the sorcery effective and some prayers were also thought to work this way so that they appeared more like spells or incantations (see Lynch, 2013 for more detail on this).

As well as power in words, the opportunity to interpret, question and fit stories into wider understandings meant that events could be given explanations. Such explanations could relieve uncertainty, suggesting why one person had become ill for example, and why another person had not. Dilley also connects knowing to certainty, that there is comfort to knowing and anxiety to not knowing (2010). Filling in a missing part of a story, or interpreting it from a particular perspective, could therefore resolve uncertainty more broadly about the world. As with cosmologies more broadly, there could be a difference in understandings, but such stories could be made sense of for people to suit their other existing ideas. Again this stresses the flexibility of stories, and the importance of the active element of retelling, interpreting and challenging. Like other anthropologists such as Marchand (2010a, 2010b), Ingold (2010), Dilley (2010), Chua (2009) and Harris (2007), I understood this knowing to be a fluid and active process. Local knowledge was not static but was rather an amalgam of understandings that coalesced around particular ideas which differed for different people but key elements of which were found across people's understandings. Through stories people could be seen to 'make' knowledge[16] (Marchand, 2010a, 2010b), and

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[15] 'Run through', meaning it had reached an end.

[16] As mentioned in Chapter 1 but which I repeat here for clarity, Marchand states that he uses the verb 'making' to refer to knowledge as it 'more accurately captures the processes and durational qualities of knowledge formation; and rather than being suggestive of hierarchical and methodological transfer, it fosters thinking about knowledge as a dialogical and constructive engagement between people, and between people, things, and environment' (2010a, pSiv)

ways of knowing were not only cerebral but were made through bodily practices and experiences. Through these discussions people's understandings emerge as not part of a clearly constructed, well-defined body of thought but as more partial, sometimes contradictory and always in the process of becoming or being put together. Again these understandings also go against the fixed nature that the term explanatory models (EMs, Kleinman, Eisenberg and Good, 1978) implies and suggests change over time and room for renegotiation and rethinking.

Through my accounts of fieldwork examples, I am also of course telling stories and telling through stories, making wider links and interpretations into a broader framework. I, like other people locally, came to know through these stories, and am here replicating the practice of telling, re-telling, and presenting these in different ways.[17] Like those in the village I also came to know through my own and other people's practices and discourses, coming to know being a process, an ongoing practice in itself as I also crafted my understandings. I, like others, was *doing* knowing and using the flexible forms that Harris (2007) suggests are needed to capture the process of knowing. While Herskovits and Herskovits' experiences in the village were ways of thinking about knowledge 'transmission' (1947), my fieldwork led me to draw out understandings of cosmologies as ways of knowing that are stable, open to change and development, crafted and co-created rather than transmitted. Through the upcoming chapters in Part II, I look particularly at understandings and knowledge around the body, health and illness. These were learned through stories but also through bodily experiences and practices as cosmological understandings were created and lived through

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[17] Ingold's (2010) notion of ways of knowing formed by wayfaring as people follow paths through life is also an apt metaphor to consider one of the ways through which I also came to know while in the village. I came to adapt my usual way of walking- initially with effort and then without realizing I slowed down my pace from the faster strides I undertook while in London. Hampered by wearing flip flops, by uneven ground and the heat but also by comments of others and an awareness that I was moving faster than other people, I altered the way my body moved for the new surrounding I was in, coming to know about how to walk through the physical as well as through the social. As Ingold comments, 'Conscious awareness does not retreat with practice, or subside into the murky depths of unconscious automatism, but rather increases in concentration and intensity with the fluency of action, along the ever-extending pathways of the body's sensory entanglement in the lifeworld' (Ingold, 2010, pS136).

healthy and afflicted bodies. As such, the following chapters are also ways in which people came to know, presented too through my own story telling.

Part II - Disorder and the Devil

5. The body and health

Shirley lived with her husband and two young children in the centre of the village where she ran the village's only commercialized herbal medicine centre. From her small office Shirley undertook consultations with her few local clients, working for a herbal medicine company based outside the local area. Shirley had spent much time researching the body and health, including through examining the Bible and books on health and healing produced by the Seventh Day Adventist church of which she was a member. Shirley did not attend the local Adventist church however, preferring instead to travel to just outside Port of Spain about once a month to attend an Adventist church there. She preferred this central church as it took a slightly different approach to the local church, inviting in speakers and holding discussions. Shirley also took a different approach to her health than many others in the local Adventist church and spent much time on her own spiritual practices such as Bible study and prayer. Shirley linked both food and herbal and bush medicines to health and to God- she had learned bush medicine as a child from her grandmother but was now adding to this repertoire of remedies with the herbal medicines she sold. She was keen to share her understandings with me and we met and discussed these on a number of occasions and for many hours at a time.

On one visit, Shirley gave me two sheets of paper she had copied out for me to help me understand how health linked to biblical texts. One of these sheets of paper said 'God's concept of medicine is herbal' and provided references to three Bible verses that she had found which backed this up; Ezekiel 47:12, Psalms 104:14 and Revelations 22:2. The other sheet of paper opened with the question 'What is the diet that God gave to man?', again giving Bible references and a sentence which summarized these.[1] Through her studies and from her

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[1] According to these sources, the diet that God gave to man was that flesh (meat) was not part of the original diet but clean meats (but not blood) were introduced following the flood and that we should glorify God in all we do, including in what we eat; 'This means we are supposed to

grandmother's education Shirley could see that God had provided foods as well as herbal medicines to heal the body and keep it healthy, and by staying healthy through eating well and taking herbal treatments when needed, a stronger relationship with God could be facilitated. This stronger relationship with God included refraining from eating to engage with God. Shirley told me that it was through fasting and prayer that devils could be cast out of people through exorcisms- to channel the Holy Spirit in a way strong enough to remove devilish spirits, the body had to be prepared to do so through fasting. Fasting improved spiritual engagement and increased concentration for prayer. Fasting was seen as not only spiritual but scientific; the blood that would usually go to the stomach after eating instead went to the brain and the person would therefore be better able to focus with their mental abilities being stronger. Shirley drew on passages in Daniel I to tell me that there was a relationship between health and mental abilities. Some people also fasted and prayed in order to do evil she told me, as fasting increased mental powers and therefore all spiritual powers. Shirley did not eat or drink (other than water) when she undertook Bible study for the same reason, it allowed her to have a stronger connection with God and she could hear Him better.

Many people in the village talked about participating in fasting, an activity also actively promoted in many (evangelical) churches. The Seventh Day Adventist church would regularly hold fast days, and individual members of this church, and others, discussed the fasting practices they undertook at particular times or on a regular basis. Fasting was understood to increase the effectiveness of prayer so was undertaken as part of prayer practices. Fasting together with prayer would therefore be used when there was an urgent or particularly difficult situation that needed the most effective form of prayer. This might be for personal family, work, or financial issues, or group-level fasting days might be directed at a broader causes such as wider crime problems within Trinidad, or for money to progress the building work on the church as was the case in one

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eat to be healthy and not just eat any and everything- Eccl.10:17; Dan1; Pro. 20:1; 23:31-35; Deu32:14'.

Seventh Day Adventist prayer service. Fasting could involve different degrees, from not consuming any food or drink (even water) to eating everything but meat, and the level or duration of fasting could differ dramatically by person and by event. While Shirley did not eat or drink at all (other than water) during the time she was fasting, which she told me was most of the time, others in the Seventh Day Adventist church talked about either not eating or drinking as well as not eating and drinking only water for the days they were fasting.

Fasting was understood to increase the individual's closeness to God by denying self desires and demonstrating control, as well as allowing blood flow that would have usually been used on digesting food to circulate to the brain, improving brain activity, an ability to focus on God, and on the prayer being made. Through fasting, individuals focused on spiritual communication with God, their bodies more open and attentive to spiritual workings, their thinking clearer and more atuned to spiritual communication. Individuals talked about feeling more spiritual and 'lighter' during periods of fasting, feeling a closeness to God and the presence of the Holy Spirit within them. They talked of fasting as a practice that took them to a more spiritual place within and through their bodies; the fasting body facilitating spiritual engagement. Fasting for the purpose of prayer and spiritual engagement fitted within wider understandings of the body in Trinidad and the Caribbean which connects the internal condition of the body to morality and moral actions as well as spirits and health. While Shirley connected these also to her own commercial herbal remedies, to passages in the Bible and to scientific understandings of the body, the body was constructed throughout these in a similar way.

The container-body

Local understandings of the body which were also part of Shirley's conceptualisations, viewed the body as a container in which excesses could build up and needed to be released. This is a concept discussed in other literature on the Caribbean such as Sobo's fieldwork in Jamaica (1993), Payne-

Jackson and Alleyne's examination of Jamaican folk medicine (2004) and is also referred to in Littlewood's work in Trinidad (1993). These conceptualizations view the body as accumulating a build-up of various substances, temperatures and emotions which would cause damage to the body if these were not released.

Littlewood (2007) refers to *studiation*, 'studying' something too much and *pressure* (serious worries) as causes of madness, brought about for example by hearing bad news too suddenly which produced 'sudden worry', or spending a long time ruminating on a problem. While I was in the village people regularly commented that they 'eint studying that', or the 'eint taking that on'- they were not going to obsessively focus on something as this would be of no benefit and would cause only worry. Littlewood describes *pressure* as relating to a particular 'worry' or to the problems of work and of poverty, and during his fieldwork this was understood as *high blood*; over-rich blood or blood rising to the head (Littlewood, 2007). During my fieldwork the concept of *pressure* had become identified with the medicalized 'high-blood pressure' diagnosed in the clinic and through blood pressure monitors. In both periods of fieldwork however, the concept of *pressure* was used to explain everyday changes in wellbeing and was seen to 'build up', needing to be 'released' or brought down. For Littlewood's interlocutors, not talking about and therefore releasing worry and anger meant that such a build up of feeling could cause madness, and in fact all 'strong feelings' should be released to stop *pressure* from forming (Littlewood, 2007). Treatment for *pressure* during my stay also included talking about and relieving stressors (including through prayer) but in addition, more medical and pharmacological treatments were suggested, such as engaging in regular exercise and using bush teas.

Heat was also seen to build up in the body through eating particular heat-giving food stuffs excessively, or sitting on a hot surface such as concrete that had been warmed by the sun- when visiting the group of women who worked in the Community Centre for example, I observed that they moved and warned younger people about sitting on hot surfaces. This heat was transferred particularly to the blood, which could also become ‘thick’ or ‘sticky’. Such heat needed to be dealt with so that the body was cooled– attention should be paid to the body to therefore maintain its temperature and its health. Various bush teas were used explicitly for ‘cooling’ and for making the blood less thick (Sobo, 1993; Payne-Jackson and Alleyne, 2004; Pavy, 1993). Particular illnesses might also be seen as ‘hot’ or ‘cold’, as has also been recorded in previous work on Trinidad and Tobago. Aho and Minott (1977) give examples of these, for example ‘cold’ illnesses included asthma and the common cold while examples of ‘hot’ illnesses were infections and illnesses that changed the skin. Treatment of these ailments involved administering ‘hot’ medications (including bush medicine such as teas) or food to ‘cold’ illnesses and ‘cold’ treatments to ‘hot’ illnesses (Aho and Minott, 1977). This was not just a process of one cancelling the other out, such treatments ‘cleans the blood’ (Littlewood, 1993) and treatments could also be taken as a prophylactic (Littlewood, 1993).[2]

While these understandings also remained during my fieldwork for some older and more specialized in this area, most people did not reflect too much on the hot/cold basis of their illness but took the bush or biomedical remedy for their ailment- cold and ‘flu-like symptoms almost always treated by bush tea, often on the advice of neighbours or older family members without in-depth discussion of temperature. Cooling the blood or body, outside of such illnesses was far more common however, and people talked of their body needing ‘cooling’. I was told that in the past purging was more common than in contemporary times. Purging was also ‘cooling’ and cleaned the body and involved drinking emetics and taking laxatives, such as Epsom salts, which would remove the build-up of ‘bad’ substances in the body. I was told that whole families, but particularly children, would engage in purging before the start of the school year, to remove the excesses of the school holidays. This was also common after Christmas to

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[2] Although I was told that taking treatment for an ailment you did not have could ‘bring it on’, in the same way that predicting rain or going out with an umbrella when it was not raining could ‘bring on’ the rain. This suggested a school of thought that went against using at least some treatments prophylactically.

clean the body before the start of the new year. Children in particular, but also other family members periodically took worming pills to clean out their systems. While purging was now less common, fasting for prayer might be seen to undertake a similar function- it emptied the body of impurities, cleaning it so that the Holy Spirit might better be heard and acted upon.

In discussions about the use of bush medicine I was told of many different remedies used for purging as well as for cooling, suggesting that both were seen as particularly important. Common also to discussions about health more generally were links to food and eating, many people telling me that the most important thing for your health was to eat well, as Shirley also mentions. Eating 'well' meant being able to eat a fair size portion and not to be restricted with what you were able to eat. For example on one occasion while we sat on Sayeed's veranda, my landlady and a member of Sayeed's family talked about how healthy they were by comparing their diet to other people's of the same age. Neither of them were restricted in what they could eat by having to avoid food with high salt or sugar content, implying that neither of them had the 'pressure' or diabetes that were common in the local area and they were therefore healthy. This was a theme that was also talked about a great deal in our house, my landlady telling me often after meals how healthy her and her husband were as they could still eat good-sized portions and not to have to worry about what they could and could not eat. In the Seventh Day Adventist church, emphasis was placed on eating green vegetables (often not consumed much locally) and not eating too much meat. This was less discussed in people's everyday conversations which tended to focus more on not eating too much sugar if you were diabetic and other dietary restrictions brought about by chronic health conditions.

Sea baths were seen as good for the body and as forms of cooling as, like sweating, bathing opened the pores on the skin, allowing build-up from inside the body to be released outside and were seen as a 'detox'. Being situated on the coast meant that this was an option easily open to people locally, and I regularly heard people refer to the sea baths they had taken, usually in the early morning. Sea baths involved lying in or lightly swimming in the sea, rather than actively moving about in this- I went to bathe with people on a couple of occasions and was told not to move around too much or too fast.[3] People would also bathe in clothing rather than in bathing costumes so that individuals' bodies were not on show, and this was visible on the local beaches where people wore long clothing as opposed to beaches in places like Tobago where tourists wore swimsuits and bikinis. One of the perceived benefits of the local area was that it was on the sea and had cool, cleansing breezes so taking a sea bath was not unusual although some people did so more frequently than others. However newer concerns about chemicals in the sea and in food that might be built up in the body were also described and bush forms of 'cooling' were not thought to be able to address these.

Sea baths and sweating were understood to cleanse through pores in the skin, as were 'bush baths', a healing treatment used to remove spirits such as those placed on the body through *obeah*[4] which involved being washed with a combination of herbs. Heat and cold were also understood as moving through the skin's pores, for example when someone used an iron or opened a fridge door. This was not usually problematic unless someone moved from the very warm to the very cold, for example using the iron and then opening the fridge door straight away so that the body's equilibrium was disturbed. Other practices and experiences were viewed as being 'hot' or 'cold' activities- to relax or 'lime' was 'to cool' while sex, dancing and carnival time were seen as 'hot' activities. Dancing, Carnival and sex could 'free-up' a person allowing a release from worries in their life, however more evangelical Christian approaches, particularly

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[3] Despite taking sea baths, a good deal of people locally could not swim. I was surprised that some of my friends in the East-West Corridor were also unable to swim and when I visited beaches and rivers in different places in Trinidad, there were often others in the water who warned that they could not swim.

[4] Bush baths are typically associated with treatment methods employed by Spiritual Baptists and by others who were linked to *obeah.* The concept of 'bush baths' was well known throughout Trinidad, and I saw newspapers refer to the Trinidadian government needing a bush bath to remove the spirits from within it, not a literal understanding of spirits in this case, but the bush bath provided a useful concept to illustrate problems in government.

Seventh Day Adventists, largely did not engage with these as these were seen as unchristian activities. Instead focusing on prayer and communication with God was viewed as a release. Other denominations, such as Pentecostals, gained release from the movement, swaying and repetitive and all-involving singing that occurred during their services- these, like Spiritual Baptist services, were active forms of worship which engaged the body as a facilitator and expresser of spiritual experience and communication.

During services in these churches, the Holy Spirit was understood to enter the body, assisted through individuals moving their bodies as part of the service. As one member of the Pentecostal church told me- '[through] moving, dancing, clapping the spirit enters our bodies'. Seventh Day Adventist services did not involve the same degree of bodily movement during worship, and a great deal of emphasis was placed on control and maintenance over the body beyond services. Adventists were encouraged to 'minister through action'- to take moderate exercise, eat lots of vegetables (and less meat), not to smoke or drink and instead to engage in healthy behaviour every day. As such, the Adventist church prided itself on the health of its congregation, a degree of health that demonstrated the morality and good Christian-nature of the members of the church. During one service the Pastor also suggested the Adventists should give advice about eating and drinking and health problems to others as a form of ministry.

Bodies were therefore objects to be worked on and maintained, build-ups within the body caused by an individual's usually preventable actions. Healthy bodies were maintained bodies and those bodies in which such build-ups occurred were neglected, less healthy and more susceptible to disease. Maintaining the body meant engaging in good Christian practices- the healthy body was also a Christian body. In turn, this healthy body allowed for a greater connection to God as a container-body allowed space for the Holy Spirit to dwell within. The notion of the body as a container, which needed to be clean and pure for the Holy Spirit to dwell within, is found particularly in Austin-Broos' work on

Pentecostals in Jamaica (1997). The women she studied worked to be ‘clean vessels’ for the Holy Spirit, and this can also be seen in Laitenen’s research on Spiritual Baptists in the Caribbean (2002). However it was not only the Holy Spirit but other spirits which might dwell within these bodies. This understanding was central to relationships between humans and spirits in other Caribbean religious practices, such as Orisha, Santeria, Voudou and *obeah* (Fernandez Olmos & Paravisini-Gebert, 2011). Maintaining the body and living a good Christian life (which also helped to maintain the body) meant that the Holy Spirit might be able to dwell within, while neglecting the body instead left it open to be entered by evil spirits. The material body therefore formed an integral part of spiritual health while spiritual relationships formed an integral part of physical health, both needing constant maintenance (for a more detailed discussion on the material aspects of the body and spirits in the village, see Lynch, 2015).

While both the Holy Spirit and devilish spirits were able to enter the body, this could not occur at the same time- the Holy Spirit did not dwell in places that the Devil could also be found, and vice versa. Both types of spirits communicated with the person they were within, guiding their actions and impacting on their thoughts and feelings so that individuals described *feeling* what the Holy Spirit wanted them to do, or being unable to control their actions as devilish spirits took over. It was important to be able to discern the differences in feeling and being led by the Holy Spirit and by the Devil. For the committed Christian this was easier- if it was anything bad or negative then it came from the Devil. The importance of the body *feeling for* things which should then be satisfied was important more generally- people *felt* for particular foodstuffs which they then sought out. Feeling in the body should be sated, the individual *needed* whatever was being felt for and people should be led by this (as long as these were not devilish). This meant that feelings and being led by these were anyway connected, so that being led by feelings occurred outside of occupation by spirits also.

The presence of the Holy Spirit meant that it was difficult for devilish spirits to enter or attach themselves to the body where they could cause sicknesses- the presence of the Holy Spirit in the body thus protected against ill health. To be a really healthy body then, the maintained container body should have the Holy Spirit dwelling within it. However maintenance was also required to keep the Holy Spirit within the body, both in terms of keeping the body healthy but also in terms of maintaining daily communication with God and the Holy Spirit. As we were told in one Pentecostal church service, God is attentive to your crying but you need to ask him for help. A person 'need[s] to give God legal authority to enter your body' (in the form of the Holy Spirit)- you have to reach out to and communicate with God, to ask him in and to be living a good Christian life, in order for the Holy Spirit to enter. God cannot enter (has no 'legal authority' to do so), when the individual is not reaching out to Him. A service held in the Seventh Day Adventist church at around the same time told us that our bodies were 'temples where the Holy Spirit must live and reign in. We must cast out the buyers and sellers from the temple'. These 'buyers and sellers' were our sins which needed to be cast out for the Holy Spirit to dwell within us, which included sinful activities we regularly engaged in, including gossiping which was used as the Pastor's example.

Evil spirits were able to enter the body through various means. I was told stories of spirits entering people through milk or other liquids which were then drunk, or through food stuffs and for these reasons a number of people told me that they refrained from, and warned me against, eating food or taking drinks from other people. Individually sealed and commercially prepackaged cakes were sold in the local shops which were seen as 'safe' as they did not have spirits in them, while food produced by particular people in the village was not eaten as it might contain something. I also spoke to some people who, although being aware of the possibility of spirits in food prepared by others, were confident that their relationship to God would stop such spirits affecting them. When spirits were removed from bodies, for example through Catholic exorcisms or Pentecostal deliverance services, I was told that such spirits were vomited out or removed through the navel, features that were also described by Csordas in his work on Charismatic Catholic healing (1997). Both Csordas and I were told that people with an evil spirit within them had foul smelling breath, which was created by the spirit within the body.

The importance of eating well, maintaining the internal equilibrium of the body, and the presence of the Holy Spirit or devilish spirits within the body as demonstrating morality, all suggest that it was the inside of the body that was important rather than bodily boundaries. It was these internal aspects which were monitored, responded to and maintained while entry into the body, for example by heat or toxins, was harder to control and less focused on (outside of preventative attempts to avoid this such as not sitting on hot concrete). This was also mentioned to me by Shirley, who told me 'What is outside is the demons, what is inside [is] that [which] matters; James 4:7 "cleanse first that that is within, that the outside may be clean also"'. The need to maintain the body also suggested the body was in a state of perpetual change and subject to the influence of outside forces, as could also be said of Trinidad as a wider nation. In both cases, individual bodies and the metaphorical body of the nation state, were not seen as static but were dynamic entities, always in the process of being made.[5]

Spirits and bodies

Spirits were viewed as free-floating entities, present all over the world (although as previously mentioned, favouring particular places) and which could attach themselves to people or objects, very much 'things' themselves. Spirits had a presence that could be felt and experienced although they were not visible entities. They were not an essential part of the body and people were not born with a spirit inside them, nor was this necessary to life, however people could

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[5] This is also an understanding of the body which fits with more recent theoretical conceptualizations such as by Ingold (2012), Deleuze and Guttari (2004), and Mol (2002).

choose to cultivate a relationship with, or lay themselves open to, spirits, either good or bad. Whereas in the past some spirits could be seen as more ambiguous, evangelical Christianity made a clear distinction between evil spirits and the Holy Spirit- the latter being the means through which God acted on earth and which allowed individuals to hear and act on God's voice. Evil spirits could cause bodily afflictions such as illnesses, and tried to persuade people to act in unchristian ways. The Holy Spirit contributed to a healthy body, guiding the individual in how to act in a Christian manner.

It was not only bodies in which spirits could dwell or attach themselves to, cosmological understandings in Trinidad and other parts of the Caribbean saw spirits also residing within, or as fixed to, other objects, something which linked also to understandings of *obeah*. Sometimes spirits choose themselves to reside in a particular place they liked to be, such as in the sea or in rivers which were seen as places connected to spirits. On other occasions, a spiritually powerful person (such as an *obeahman/woman*) could instruct spirits to be attached to a particular object, such as to prized possessions or objects requiring spiritual powers to make these stronger. Objects that might be given strength through this included fighting sticks which were, in the past, used as part of fighting competitions, while prized possessions could contain a spirit that entered and afflicted individuals who tried to steal them. The most common references I heard to spirits being placed on objects were in stories of people's fruit trees and crops being protected through this method in order to stop people stealing from these. Places particularly associated with *obeah* were linked to this form of protection so I was told not to take mangoes from trees in Tobago (and stories of people who had done so), or in Moruga, or from particular people in the villages along the coast.

Spirits were passed on from objects to person through touch, so through picking up or handling an object, the spirit might be transferred to the body. Particular people could be targeted with a spirit therefore and a spirit may be placed on a particular object which they were likely to pick up. People told me about how spirits were put on the pens of particularly successful students at school (something which had happened a few years ago in the village, resulting in a student becoming possessed and then dying), and so it was wise not to lend your pen to people or to use stationary found lying around. Individuals told me about items that had been left for them to pick up, which they would deliberately leave as they were suspicious, or pick up resulting in spiritual affliction. It was also for this reason that people in the village told me, and each other, not to pick up anything left at the side of the road, especially money, which was a prime means through which spirits were transferred. It was also for this reason that often the very spiritually powerful were not asked to pay for the things they bought, the money they handed over to pay with likely being full of spirits which could enter the body of the vendor. Indeed a friend of mine from the East-West Corridor boasted that when her very spiritually powerful uncle went to particular areas of Port of Spain, no one would accept his money and he was given food and drink without paying for it- a benefit her uncle told me he was careful not to abuse. While in the past these spirits were malevolent, through more evangelical Christian interpretation these were seen to be explicitly devilish.

Spirits were therefore able to permeate the boundaries of both bodies and other objects, protection from this only afforded by being ‘covered in the blood’. In previous times, the individual would take measures such as wearing a talisman to protect themselves from particular spirits- for example two older spiritual men in the village told me that they ‘wore’ prayers, these were written in small writing on paper that was rolled up and put inside pendants on their bodies. Instead of, or in addition to these talismen, people relied on cure by going to an *obeahman/woman* or similar spiritual specialist to have spirits removed. However through the evangelical churches an alternative protection from the workings of evil spirits was offered. Such protection came through an ongoing commitment and relationship to God, conceptualized as the presence of the Holy Spirit within the individual and the powerful protective covering offered by Jesus’ split blood. Such protection prevented a wide range of possible spiritual attacks and was thus more comprehensive and more workable for everyday life.

This might have formed part of the appeal of evangelical Christianity in the local area where individuals often reported feeling vulnerable and disenfranchised by the state and state institutions.

Locating the soul and individual agency

Spirits were different to a notion of a soul, indeed while people talked about souls, this was not a term that was often drawn on outside of an explicitly Christian conversation, and people were not certain where these were located. Some talked about the soul as being a part of the person that was attached to God in a fairly abstract way, but more frequently this term was used interchangeably with the notion of an individual's spirit and soul, which were part of a person and their very nature. Churches services tended to refer to the term 'soul' more than people out of churches, and could also use the term to refer to people, e.g. 'We need to keep all souls here [coming to church]' (Seventh Day Adventist service).[6] It was also not clear what happened to someone's soul or spirit after death, some people saying that it went straight to heaven, some saying that it could hang around earth in graveyards and be used in *obeah* practices, while others suggested it was waiting in an in-between state for the End of Days. Different forms of explanations were drawn on at different times, with people talking about their dead relatives in heaven, *obeah* use of the spirits of the dead, *jumbies* that could be found on bridges and roadsides, and the upcoming time when The Just would rise to battle at Jesus' side against the Devil's hoards. In all cases however, the body was the seat of the soul or the person's spirit, and this would move out of the body after death. A person's soul or spirit was created at the point of conception (by God) and was molded during pregnancy- which was why the mother's experiences through her pregnancy could be passed onto her unborn child and was also why abortion was strongly opposed.

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[6] This statement reinforced that all people attending the church should continue to attend and people should not 'backslide' by failing to turn-up.

If a person’s soul or spirit was said to reside in any particular place in the body this was most often linked to the heart or the mind. The mind was where a person’s thinking took place while the heart was the seat of emotions and feelings. Both heart and mind could lead someone to do things, particularly the heart, but also ‘feeling for’ something in terms of wanting/needing something. Positive feelings about something were seen as coming from God, while if they were more negative, they came from the Devil. A Pentecostal woman told me explicitly that negative feelings such as ‘anger’ or ‘malice’ were works of the flesh and the Devil, and devilish spirits in the body, used these to get people to commit crimes or act in unchristian ways.[7]

Religious experiences were seen as emotional events, and women were also seen as more emotional than men. Woman’s emotional nature and the emotional nature of church services were given to me as reasons why more women attended churches than men, and why they expressed manifestations of the Holy Spirit more clearly than men both in Pentecostal and Spiritual Baptist services. In Pentecostal services in particular, women tended to be more expressive, some cried and I saw only women, not men, being ‘slain by the spirit‘ (collapsing or falling backwards with the power of the Holy Spirit). When men were ‘anointed’ or ‘touched by the spirit’ this tended to be a more subtle and less violent response. I was told by a senior member of the Pentecostal

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[7] However when I spoke to others in the village, or was part of conversations where crime was discussed, the devilish basis of such feelings was less explicit and more reference was made to possession by devilish spirits. The notion that ‘envy kills‘ was common however, and I also saw this written on cars across Trinidad. This was linked to ‘bad mind‘- feeling envious about what other people had could drive someone to become unpleasant and a little unhinged (as was said to have happened to one of our neighbours, the son of Georgina) or could cause people to send an *obeah* spirit on someone, an action that would ultimately come back on the person themselves. ‘Envy kills’ referred to the death or demise of the person who was envious, rather than the person who was envied. ‘Bad mind‘ was also linked to ‘spite‘ or ‘revenge‘ which might cause someone to act in a particular way. An example of this was ‘copper pox‘ which could be produced by the spiteful actions of one lover to another (as was also said to have happened to the same neighbour, Georgina’s son who had ‘bad mind‘). Sucking on copper coins during sexual intercourse and then swallowing them just before discharge of either semen or vaginal fluids caused the copper to enter the sexual partner’s blood stream and could kill them. The main symptom of copper pox was an excretion from the skin that looked like lather. This had to be removed through purging or it would kill the person. Copper pox was not common and was seen as a spiteful act that happened more in previous times.

church that this was because the Holy Spirit communicated through ‘emotion‘ (feelings) in women and through ‘ego‘ (the brain) in men. Here more of a mind/emotion split was drawn, and the identification of women with emotion and heart, and men with thinking and head were also followed more broadly in church services, although less so in everyday practices in village life. In church sermons and lessons for example, men were said to be heads of the household, ‘the priest of the house‘, and women could be too emotional and prone to gossip. Again neither of these appeared to be the case in practice locally.

God communicated through ‘intuition‘ which could either be heart or mind-based- ‘you just know you know something‘. People told me they ‘just knew in my heart‘, or they ‘just knew‘ that God was present or communicating with them. I was also told that God ‘knows what is in our minds, while the Devil don’t‘, although the Devil could tell through a person’s behaviour. That the interior life and morality of people could be seen through their behaviour was understood more generally, so that what was in a person’s mind or heart was expressed through their actions. My landlady told me for example, ‘See how she wicked!‘ when Georgina, a neighbour of ours, told someone working in the area to keep away from her garden, her gruff manner and unpleasantness expressing an permanent, internal quality. To be bad-minded was to seek-out and be unpleasant to people, to plan to be so because of an innate quality of being wicked. To be spirit-minded was to know, to be open to, and to have an innate ability to work with spirits, either good or bad. These forms of mindedness brought together an innate aspect of a person with a tendency to plan and act on this.[8]

Individual volition was thus seen as linked to the mind and to emotion, both of which lead people to act in particular ways. People’s agency could be affected

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[8] This also implied that someone ‘studied‘ being wicked or the spiritual, as the verb ‘to mind‘ something meant to study or focus on something, and locally many people were criticized for ‘minding‘ other people too much (being too aware of other people’s actions and situation- *maco-ing*).

through spirits working in or on the body, as well as through body parts that were no longer attached. For example through *obeah* practices, parts of the body and bodily substances, such as fingernails, blood and teeth, could be manipulated to influence the human agency of the individuals they were taken from. This could be a real fear and I met some people who would ask their hairdresser to sweep up all their hair after it was cut and to return it to them so that it could not be taken by others to be used in *obeah*. These understandings are found in other Caribbean spiritual practices, like Voudou, where manipulation of parts taken from a person, such as their hair or teeth, can manipulate the person themselves. In Trinidad, a person's clothing, and particularly their underwear, were also seen to have the power to control people. 'Tying' someone to a person using *obeah,* such as a woman or a man tying a lover to them to stop them leaving them, was well-known locally and Petra told me how this had happened to her. She had had a no-good boyfriend whom she was unable to leave, even though he abused her physically. Other people also told her to leave him and when she said she was unable to they suggested that he had tied him to her using *obeah*. One day she found a container hidden in the back of the refrigerator with a pair of her underwear and bush leaves in a liquid. She realized that this was how he was tying her to him so she took this out and destroyed it. Her underwear had the power to restrict her agency therefore. Although not part of her body it was worn directly on it and could be manipulated in a similar way.

In addition, bodily substances from one person could also have the power to control the agency of others and could be used in 'tying'. An example of this was 'sweat rice' where women were said to place some of their vaginal fluids into the food that they were cooking which would tie a lover to them, or even, in the case of those who ran food stalls, tie customers to them so that they keep coming back for more. These were seen as common explanations as to why someone might be staying with a lover who was clearly no good, or why food places which served terrible food remained popular. A woman in a nearby village who ran a food stall was recognized as doing this, a number of people giving her as an example when I asked about sweat rice. Bodily fluids were therefore recognized as having real power, the power to impact on the individual they were taken from as well as the power to impact on other people. As well as re-framing individual agency as being influenced by the material body, the understandings of bodily substances and parts that were detached from the body as still affecting the body and controlling it, suggests that the boundaries of the body did not end at what was currently attached. Rather concepts of the body, and self and agency go beyond the boundaries conceptualized in Euro-American cultures to include those bodily parts which were once physically attached. Rather than Mary Douglas' suggestion that these body parts are neither self nor non-self, rendering them 'matter out of place' (Douglas, 1966), in the Trinidadian context these remained part of self. The body *was* the self and this body (for example in health or illness) revealed the morality of the individual.

While self was located in individual bodies, there was a way in which selves (and other bodies) were connected or influenced each other. The strong individualistic nature of the Caribbean is well noted (e.g. Littlewood, 1988, 1993, 2007; Miller, 1994), and has been connected to the nature of slavery which split families and community networks. While agency remained absolutely individual, and part of God's creation of humankind (ensuring that every individual had free will to chose how to act, whether to follow God or the Devil), there were ways in which individuals were connected to others and their behaviour influenced how these others were viewed. An individual's actions influenced how the church they were part of was seen, something that churches were very aware of so that members who affected the moral standing of the church could be reprimanded or asked to leave. I heard of this happening on a few occasions in the Seventh Day Adventist church, perhaps because the church held itself up as different and the highest and most moral of the local denominations. As I will go on to examine shortly, the actions of members of a household also influenced how other members were seen.

Those who grew up in the area were also seen as part of it and their actions, even after leaving, were seen as having an influence on the area. The student who did well academically or in sport for example, was talked of proudly and as contributing to the prestige of the area. I was also told about people who had gone on to get good government jobs, again their success seen as reflecting on the area. Those who left the area were expected to retain a connection to it, and remain part of it, and I was told on a number of occasions about a couple of successful people who had grown up in the area- now a lawyer and a businessman- who had failed to continue to contribute financially or even make clear where they were from. A well-known soca singer came from the area and was criticized locally for not acknowledging that she was part of the community. At the same time, there was also a nationally known criminal who came from the local area, who people referred to as reflecting badly on the community. All those who grew up in the area were therefore considered part of it, whether the community or the individual wished them to be, and their actions reflected on the village. These selves were linked together in a way that was not chosen by individuals, whereas in joining a church, or remaining within a household allowed a degree of choice about who one was seen as connected to. These individual bodies then retained individual agency but were part of wider, virtual bodies made up of a number of individuals whose actions influenced the morality of others. The actions of individuals also had to be maintained therefore to uphold the morality of the larger virtual body.

Changing bodies: the mutable and the immutable

Bodies portrayed the practices that an individual carried out, or what they were undergoing, and the body could be changed by these. Not only might the degree of spiritual connection with the Holy Spirit be read in the healthy body, but other practices and people’s circumstances could also be seen. This might be on a more humorous level, for example there was a woman who was recognized as a thief in the next village who was said to have stolen chickens. Appearently this woman now resembled a chicken, walking in a chicken-like way and speaking with a clucking edge to her voice. While these features were ascribed to her as it was known what her actions had been, commenting on her chicken-like body was also a way in which her body was seen to illustrate her actions, and there was some delight in talking about this. Other changes in the bodies of local people that were commented on were more serious in tone, for example, when it was noted that someone was losing weight very quickly. The focus of the discussion may be on the weight loss, however the implication and local understanding behind this was that this person likely had AIDS- they were suffering the full-blown stages of the disease and would not last for much longer. Several people in the villages along the coast were assumed to have died from this, or at least there were rumours of them doing so. This sudden weight loss was seen as different to children and plants that 'failed to thrive', where the cause would more likely be attributed to *mal-jo* (evil eye), which stopped children and plants from flourishing.

Other bodily changes observed included girls seen to be 'developing too fass', which carried the implication that the girl had become sexually active before she should. As well as hearing about this anecdotally this was used in relation to an occurrence of incest that became widely known in the village while I was there. In this case, a girl's brother was understood to have been sexually abusing her, and it was said that the girl's mother knew about this and had failed to act (not something that was seen as particularly unusual, although it was viewed negatively). A neighbour who suspected that the girl was being abused eventually took her in, and the matter then became more public. People in the village confided among each other that they could tell something was occurring because this girl was 'developing too fass' for her age- her body had changed suddenly, showing that she was sexually active through her more womanly figure with larger breasts and shaped hips and buttocks.

The externally visible body as reflecting its internal state can be linked to Miller's understanding of an inside/outside dichotomy within Trinidadian culture (1994).[9] He suggests that what is visibly displayed to others is most important, for example hanging curtains so that the pattern of the curtain is seen from the outside while the curtain liner was visible from the inside, something termed 'dressing the street'. He also notes the popularity of body-building over attending the gym which may result in less visible changes to the body, and in my own work I noted that containers from more expensive brands would be refilled with cheaper ones, such as Nescafé coffee jars being refilled with the cheaper Venezuelan instant coffee brands. However in drawing this dichotomy, Miller does not examine the relationship between the two sides, the inside and outside. It is the fact that there is a relationship between these that means that what is seen on the outside implies that this is also what occurs on the inside- that the external reflects the internal which is *why* people focus on making sure the external looks impressive. Dressing the street implies that the inside of the house is just as nice, that the built-up body is a fit body, that the coffee inside the jar is expensive Nescafé coffee. The healthy-looking outside body also suggested that the internal aspects of the body were also healthy, including the morality of the individual. Perhaps this was why there was a stress not only on personal moral practices that may not be visible to others in the village (such as praying at home and communicating with God), but also on practices that displayed individual morality to others. This included visibly attending churches, giving testimonies of prayers answered and God's working in one's life in church and to friends and neighbours, and playing Christian songs, radio and TV channels. A neighbour could regularly be heard loudly singing and praying to God from the house I shared with my landlady and her husband, something which caused my landlady to comment with disdain as to why such personal acts were being made so public. This was just so others in the village knew how pious this individual was. My landlady was dismissive of the action declaring

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[9] Austin (1979) also makes a distinction between 'inside' and 'outside' in her work in Jamaica, although in a different sense. She examines the use of inside/outside terminology as applied to domestic set-ups and in work life where the term 'outside' was used to reflect subordination, less education, and someone lower in class.

much to our amusement ‘What God deaf?’- obviously God was not deaf but heard even those who did not pray out loud so it was unnecessary to make such a noise to gain His attention.

As well as changing bodily substances, and states and emotions that could build up in the body, the body itself could also change and be changed by practices. However while bodies were viewed as always in a state of change, unstable entities needing to be maintained and cared for, there were some aspects of the body, health and illness, which were viewed as unchanging and stable. Bodily substances could alter but a person’s ‘essence’[10] did not- some people were kind, bad, grumpy etc., there was something within that made them this way and this was a stable characteristic. In part this could occur in the womb- if a pregnant woman experienced a lot of anger or emotional upset during pregnancy this could then be passed onto her unborn child. As one older spiritual man in his seventies told me ‘From moment woman conceives a child she muss look after it and sheself [she] cannot get vex or angry, make an angry an’ vex child’. This had happened to his own daughter, his wife was very angry and vexed while she was pregnant and when his daughter was born she was also angry and whiney. He told me that it was his wife’s fault for affecting the child with her own emotions- what a mother ate and felt affected the unborn child from the moment of its conception.

These ideas could be found in *obeah* practices also- if a person’s spirit was to be called up to act as a *jumbie* or *obeah* spirit, it was best to select the spirit of a person who had been ferocious, angry or aggressive in life, as their spirit would continue to be so after death. The bodies of those who had been shy, quiet and retiring were not seen to make useful *jumbies*. There were also particular characteristics that were said to be inherited through families, such as being a thief or being intelligent. A local school teacher told me how these ideas were

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[10] A man’s ‘essence’ or ‘nature’ were also terms which referred to a man’s sexual appetite and prowess, and sometimes also to semen itself. This was also often the focus for bush and herbal remedies, including commercial herbal remedies.

manifested in schools- children were seen to have inherited cleverness, and that if this was not present in the family it never would be. Such skills were inherited in children from their parents and not because they lived in a household which placed an emphasis on education and learning. Consequently, these inheritances were a sort of destiny- there was no point in trying to alter them through trying hard at school for example, whether a person was bright or good at sport, or not bright or not good at sport, came from their family and could rarely be changed.

Likewise there were families who were seen as inherently untrustworthy- if someone's brother was a thief, it was likely that they were a thief. There was also the assumption that practices were shared by those in the same household- if particular people in a family were known for practicing *obeah*, it would be assumed that the rest of the family also practiced this. It should be noted however, that these forms of inheritance occurred mostly (although not always) on a household level, so that those related by blood and not living the same household were not necessarily seen to share the same practices or character, and those who were not related by blood but lived in the same household may share these.

These notions of inheritance of particular traits and practices were also used interchangeably with the notion of genetic inheritance and so genetically inherited illnesses were seen as a punishment from God (who allowed the Devil to work on the body), affecting a whole family. This could be related to Bible verses where the sins of the fathers were passed on to their children, and their children's children (Exodus 34:6-7).[11] I was given the example of where cancer had affected nearly the whole family and was told they were being punished for having a grandmother who was a well-known *obeahwoman*. Was there no way

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[11] Exodus 34:6-7 states: '[6] And the Lord passed before him and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, [7] keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing *the guilty,* visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation."' (NKJV)

of getting out of this inheritance, I asked? While some people told me that there was no possibility to shake this off, other responded that only if someone truly truly repented and fully embraced the Lord might they be freed and their genetic destiny altered. Otherwise, the immutability of genetic inheritance meant that individuals could not avoid this. Even if someone inherited this destiny, they were also somewhat responsible for it- their family had practiced devil-worship and so all must be punished, they had brought it on themselves.

The immutability of genes as compared to the changing nature of the body could also be seen in other contexts in Trinidad. A psychologist I spoke to in Port of Spain told me that she often came across clients who talked of a ‘domestic violence gene’, a gene that particular people inherited that meant that someone inevitably would become violent at home. Again, this was seen as immutable and inevitable.

Not all commonalities that occurred within families were seen as inherited however- spirits that dwelt within the body were not passed on directly but through the actions of a family, and more that one family member could be affected as in the case of two brothers afflicted by spirit possession (see Chapter 6). Children were not born with spirits (either good or bad) dwelling within them, and local people could also remember what these brothers had been like prior to spirit possession- they had been bright and relatively successful. These brothers had suffered a changed state, but it was not the inherited and inevitable destiny that genetic inheritance brought. The brothers could therefore get rid of the spirits should they really want to, while the genetic curses passed on through generations were almost entirely unavoidable.

Morality and the body

To some extent these cultural understandings also linked to public health messages that were promoted more broadly in Trinidad (and in public health more generally)- taking individual responsibility for health through looking after the body by not drinking, smoking, eating excessively or engaging in sex with many different partners. These ‘unhealthy’ practices were all actions that were also viewed locally as unchristian, and were used to distinguish those who were good Christians and those who were not. Morality was therefore created and maintained by practices, how the individual acted was who they were- living in a Christian way demonstrated their morality and enhanced it. This Christian life was also linked to health and wellbeing- the Holy Spirit protecting the individual from interference from the Devil, suffering from illness could be the fault of the afflicted person.[12]

Morality was therefore embodied and created through actions, which created a particular *type* of body. Through these moral practices a healthy and maintained body, with the Holy Spirit within, was created while neglected bodies were not fit for the Holy Spirit. These were bodies of a different type, potentially or actually sick. These bodies were *materially* different, healthy or sick, but also differed in the presence of the Holy Spirit which changed the nature of the body itself. Not only was morality expressed and embodied through the materiality of the body, but it altered that materiality, so the body was not only metaphorically different to the non-Christian’s body, but was actually a different type of body. This understanding links to other evangelical Christian notions of how the Devil works on the body to cause illness.[13] While spirits were not visible, they could be felt and experienced and had important material consequences. Spirits changed the nature of objects they attached themselves to. The immaterial was expressed through materiality and had material results- this helps better understand how the Devil might cause illnesses in the body, such as cancer or heart attacks. A focus on spirits as ‘things’ that interact with other things such as bodies, cells and blood also moves away from understanding spiritual

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[12] This is also found in Eves’ work on Pentecostal Chrisitanity and illness in Melanesia (2010).

[13] During my fieldwork I attended a course in a Pentecostal church in Port of Spain which was led by a North American Baptist Preacher and clinician. He used his medical understanding of how the body worked to isolate where the Devil’s intervention could be found. For example he noted how the Devil worked on a cellular level to cause cancer, changing the material nature of healthy cells into malignant cells.

afflictions and possession in cognitive and/or more functionalist terms. This suggests not only that we take the materiality of the body seriously, but also the relationship this has with the spiritual (Lynch, 2015).

Bodies, like other objects, could have spirits within them- spirits able to penetrate their boundaries, dwelling within the container-body. While bodies were in a state of perpetual change, there were elements of the body that could be seen as more static- genetic inheritance and character traits were fixed while the rest of the body was more fluid.[14] Discourses around genetic inheritance were linked to biomedical understandings of DNA and inheritedness and spiritual practices were given biomedical explanations for their effectiveness. As I will go on to discuss in more detail, the way in which the Devil was seen to work on the body to cause disease and why forms of healing were seen to be effective were also connected to biomedical understandings. Biomedicine and bush or herbal medicine were not separate and independent systems but had points of merger and departure, again assemblages of knowledge drawn on at some points rather than others- a cosmological assemblage that was not static and well-formed but stable and made up of various connected components. Through bodies therefore, cosmological understandings and moral positioning were expressed and understood. In the next three chapters I focus on how the Devil acted on the body, how bodies were treated and healed, and the wider workings of the Devil beyond the individual body, the body, health and illness thus forming an important aspect of local morality and expression of cosmological understandings.

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[14] Bodies were constructed as not static but dynamic, in a state of perpetual change, as Ingold suggest 'This is to think of the body not as a sink into which practices settle like a sediment in a ditch, but rather as a dynamic center of unfolding activity' (2012).

6. The Devil in the body

Skeeter was a well-known community member. He was in his fifties with a slender frame, and was known locally for being a heavy drinker. He was looked after by a female relative who lived in the centre of the village, right on the main road that wound through it. Skeeter often hung around the front of her house by the side of the main road, where her adult sons and daughters and their friends would gather. Together they drank rum and beer, talking and laughing loudly. The family were not viewed as respectable in the village, their hanging about at the side of the road, playing loud music and making public their drinking and squabbles contributed to this, and rumours abounded about their lewd behaviour and drunkenness. Their set-up also meant that their lives were in many ways more public than other people's. The house was of traditional design, constructed of wood, and had no bathroom. A roughly constructed shower could be seen from the road alongside the house and the family walked to the public latrine a short distance away when necessary. Their bathroom behaviour was therefore more obvious and family members would walk around and sit in front of the house wearing just a towel. Although in other areas of the village, people may wear their house clothes and clothes they slept in to visit each other's houses nearby, or to pick a copy of Newsday or the Guardian from local shops, wearing only a towel was extremely rare. Clarissa, the head of the household, was employed by the municipality and worked hard, clearing the road and cleaning the public latrine. Her daughters at times lived with her with their children, and sometimes with boyfriends, which perhaps contributed to the idea that her daughters had sex for money and possessions. The family was not easy to build a relationship with, and it was many months before I was able to chat to Skeeter privately.

Skeeter used to be in a local band, The Fantastic Rum, because all the group members drank rum and knew it was fantastic. Skeeter told me that he knew alcohol 'ain good but it comforts your mind sometimes'. He chiefly drank rum, but also beer, and although he had a steady job (which he made sure he completed before he started drinking), his wife had left him due to his drinking and he had no contact with his children. He had tried to stop drinking, but then he ‘goes astray’, led by the bad spirits than have been ‘put on’ him that made him drink rum. Skeeter told me that ‘occultism’ (another word for *obeah*), was used by local people to bring others down who were viewed as being more successful, and that this had happened to him- someone had used *obeah* to put an evil spirit on him which made him drink rum. He felt that despite his drinking he had a good and pure heart and it was only the jealousy of another that had led them to put an evil spirit on him- ‘Why do I want to drink rum? Don’t hate nobody’, he told me. Skeeter had had friends who had died ‘with rum’. All he felt he could do about his situation was to pray about it to God. All he felt he had was his female relative and his God, a God who would always provide for him, no matter what. Skeeter used to be an acolyte at the local Anglican church, but gave this up many years ago as the services took too long, and like many of those locally who identified themselves as Anglican, he rarely attended church.

That Skeeter’s drinking had a spiritual cause was something suggested to me by other members of the community. Theories around Skeeter’s drinking included those who agreed with Skeeter that he had been a victim of *obeah* while others suggested that he had brought the evil spirit into/onto himself through his unchristian life-style. For some people Skeeter was not possessed by a spirit as could clearly be seen in other members of the community such as Louis and his brother, Davey. Louis and Davey were clearly spirit possessed- they spoke to voices they heard, had had spells in Trinidad’s main psychiatric hospital and were on anti-psychotic medication. By contrast Skeeter was seen to be ‘spirit oppressed’- he was being bothered by a spirit that was pestering him from outside his body, influencing his mind and encouraging him to drink. This could, in turn, be separated from ‘spiritual obsession’ when an external spirit affected a person’s mind to make them obsessed with something or someone.

Whatever Skeeter's precise problem, his lack of engagement with the church and with God made him more susceptible to spiritual and demonic afflictions, and less able to resist them. By *choosing* to be away from God Skeeter was allowing the Devil to have greater influence on his life, he was *choosing* the Devil over God and was therefore responsible for his own drinking. Like Evans-Pritchard's *umbaga*, or second spear (1976 [1937]), Skeeter had a drinking problem that caused difficulties in his life, but it was witchcraft or the Devil that was causing him to drink.

Experiences of spiritual afflictions

Sicknesses were seen to be either 'natural' or 'spiritual' in cause. These categories of natural and spiritual illnesses were local classifications but in practice could overlap. While some ailments were clearly spiritual in nature, such as *mal-jo*, the spiritual nature of other sicknesses only emerged later, for example when they did not follow their predicted course, when they did not respond to biomedical treatment, or where symptoms lingered or were unable to be linked to a disease. Spiritual explanations were therefore used to address uncertainty around illness and misfortune, explaining what medical systems could not.[1] However, given that God was in control of all things, all medical treatment was only effective through the will of God, and given that all that was good came from God while all that was bad was from the Devil, all illness and suffering was ultimately from the Devil- the Devil caused disorder at the level of the body.

While God protected those close to Him from illness, there were cases when God's faithful servants experienced personal misfortune. Such misfortune was

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[1] Littlewood (1988) also notes that Foster's dualistic approach to explanations of illness, where *naturalistic* causes of illness (an impersonal cause like other natural phenomena, independent of human consciousness) and *personalistic* causes (due to active intervention by an agent, human or other) are seen to be distinct and mutually exclusive, does not necessarily hold in Trinidad. In the context of his work Littlewood noted that both causes might be applied to the same illness or behaviour pattern (1988).

either seen as an opportunity for meditation on suffering (an explanation more readily given by Catholics), an opportunity for God's glory to be revealed through miraculous cure, or like the sores afflicted on Job by Satan, individuals saw themselves as being tested by God to show their devotion. There could be different explanations to episodes of illness recounted by neighbours and others in the community, in the individual's church or by the afflicted individual or their family. This meant that an individual and their family could perceive the illness to be a test of faith in God, while others could view it as punishment for immoral behaviour.

Skeeter's experiences provide a case study of one of a number of people who suffered from what I viewed as a sub-category of illnesses with a spiritual cause. These were illnesses where a discrete devilish spirit entered or acted on the body and which I group together as 'spiritual afflictions'. People locally often termed these 'possession', or illnesses caused by 'demons on assignment', or something being 'put on' a person through *obeah*.[2] As well as other cases of spirit oppression like Skeeter's, I was told it was also possible to be spirit obsessed, a spirit that made the individual obsess about a certain thing or person, but I did not come across any obvious cases of such. Cases of 'spirit lash' and of 'tying', milder forms of spiritual affliction, were more common, but not always readily discussed.

A spirit lash was used to describe a spiritual cause of a bodily affliction. This might include something felt like a stiff shoulder, or something more obviously visible, for example a swollen, injured or infected foot. While the cause might not obviously be spiritual, this could be suspected if the injury had appeared without any other apparent cause, or if it did not respond to treatment. In such cases it was understood that a spirit had 'lashed' at the body, sometimes trying to enter the corpus but unsuccessful in doing so, or just attempting to harm the individual. Generally the spirit was seen not to reside within or around the individual (sometimes this was disputed or people were not sure), but the injury

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[2] Given these range of terms, I link these here under one loose category for the purposes of analysis and presentation.

remained removable only by spiritual treatment. Such treatment might be a form of exorcism by church pastors or members of one of the evangelical churches or the Spiritual Baptist church, but sometimes other spiritually powerful individuals were able to resolve this. ‘Tying’ also impacted on individual agency and in these cases the spirit entered or surrounded the body through an object and might leave the body if the item was destroyed or exorcised.

In general, personal cases of mild spiritual affliction were not widely shared but could be come across in conversation in a closed group. Cases of spirit possession that might explain an individual’s changed behaviour or criminality were speculated on more publically. Individuals in the local area who were clearly spirit possessed could not hide their affliction and there were a few members of the village who were known to suffer from this. This included the brothers, Louis and Davey who had other brothers and nephews in the village who were not possessed.

Louis and Davey had grown up in the area and local people could remember them before they had become possessed, both relatively successful at school, and Louis had then left the area to take up a prestigious job in a famous hotel chain while Davey had been a fisherman. Most other members of the family were connected to fishing, a profession that was well known as connected to *obeah* use. It was speculated that *obeah* use either by one or other of the brothers, or within in the family itself, had brought on their possession- although I also heard that the brothers may have attended services at a church that was set up locally by the father of Clara. Both brothers had been in and out of St. Ann’s, Trinidad’s main psychiatric hospital, and were under the care of psychiatric services. Both were described as ‘possessed’ but also ‘mad’, these terms being used interchangeably by some people.

Louis was more aggressive than Davey, spending each day walking for miles between the villages along the coast. He was very slim and muscular and like Davey, and a few other ‘mad’ or ‘possessed’ people locally, he was given free food packages from the dinners served at local schools. He had no permanent residence but instead would spend the night in abandoned houses (of which the area had many), or sometimes on the beach. I was told that if I saw a bundle of clothes wrapped up and tucked away that these were probably Louis' and that he got very angry if he saw anyone touching or moving these. Davey was more involved in everyday village life, walking every morning into the centre of the village where he spent much of the day sitting outside a bar or on a wall, chatting to others doing the same. Davey had a permanent residence located in the same compound as where I lived, and it was possible to hear him leave each morning and return each night, usually pushing his 'car'- a wheeled frame with a car steering wheel attached to it that would be 'parked' not far from wherever he was. Davey would call out to me, and others who passed him, and we would sometime chat a little. I also saw Davey at occasional services at the Catholic church and he joined us for the part of the Good Friday Catholic stages of the cross walk, which moved along the road between a number of nearby villages. He tended to engage more with others than Louis, but both he and Louis were looked out for by the community and were certainly part of it.

Clara also suffered from spirit possession, an affliction that had previously affected her mother and possibly her father. She was also called 'mad', and referred to by some people as 'the mad girl', or as 'the/our girl' more often than I would hear people use her name. Clara would often sit on walls in the centre of the village, talking to herself, sometimes shouting at people, sometimes teased by those passing. Clara attended services at a number of churches, perhaps more than other community members were aware of as only Clara and I would visit such a range of churches so regularly. I saw her at Anglican, Evangelical, Independent Baptist and Seventh Day Adventist services, although not at either Spiritual Baptist church, nor at the Pentecostal or Catholic services that were held in nearby villages. She did not fully participate in services, not singing or reading, often talking to herself quietly through them. She did pray, although not aloud like others, and did not communicate with other people. People accepted her presence, often without comment, in a way that they did in the rest of the village. In the churches no one teased her and occasionally reached out to her to pass her something (not often taken), but she was largely left to her own devices. It was viewed as commendable that she might be trying to remove the possession by attending church, but she was never really seen as part of the congregation proper.

Stories of Clara’s background were also well-known. She was the only remaining family member in the village of a spiritually powerful man. He was described to me variously as an *obeahman*, a Spiritual or Shouter Baptist, a follower of Orisha or more than one of these, all of which interchangeably suggested engagement with powerful devilish spirits. He had set-up a sort of church on a particular area of land, a little further behind where I lived in the village. Only his family and a very few other individuals ever attended this church where he led services that engaged (knowingly or not) with devilish spirits that then afflicted members of the congregation. A story I heard many times was when his wife and Clara both ran naked through the village, both possessed, and I was told that Clara’s mother said she wanted to see the ‘naked truth’ (although I suspected that this was added later as a quip). Some time after this, Clara’s mother left the village to live with relatives in a town along the East-West Corridor, Clara’s brothers already having left the area. Clara was then left to care for her father alone in their house, her own signs of possession still present. I was told even before I met Clara that when her father had died it had taken four days for anyone to notice. During this time Clara was still cooking for him, reportedly becoming more and more angry that he was not eating. The story went that when he started to smell the neighbours investigated, Clara still indignant that he did not get up to eat. Clara had continued to live alone since this event, but the fact that she was alone, and perhaps not in a position to refuse, meant that a number of men in the village were rumoured to have visited her for sex. I asked whether this sex was consensual and most people believed that it was not, and while people expressed that this was regrettable, there was never any suggestion that any kind of intervention should occur which may have taken place if she was not possessed.

Due to understandings of houshold connectedness and the ways in which diseases and spirits might be passed on through generations, that spirit possession affected members within the same family came as no surprise. Some whole families were 'bad' because of the way in which they behaved (Clara's family would largely fall into this), and I was told that 'the apple don' fall far from the tree', sons and daughters often carry the characteristics of parents, and may act in the same way. Spirit possession was not viewed as 'genetic' in this sense, but it was perfectly understandable that members in the same family who were 'weakened' by their unchristian behaviour, or that of their relatives, may be afflicted.

Medication improved Louis and Davey's symptoms, and community members knew when their medication had run out, or had not been taken- remembering also the occasion when Davey had taken Louis' more powerful medication that had 'knock he out'! Such treatment did not address the cause of the possession however, which was clearly spiritual. I was told that treatment for the root cause of possession therefore was also spiritual, and only through exorcism or deliverance could such spirits be removed. These treatments could be conducted by particular Catholic priests who had been trained and given permission to undertake this (only three such priests were based in Trinidad while I was there), or by particular members or groups from other churches who had such a gift from God. In addition a few other spiritually strong individuals could undertake this, including those from other religious affiliations. The power to remove full spirit possession was very much seen as a gift, but also an ability that involved preparation, training, and sometimes assistance from others. Some individuals or groups were better know for these abilities than others, and an afflicted individual might be taken to more than one person if an exorcism was not effective. In the village there was no one who was particularly known for this gift, although exorcisms of different kinds had reportedly been carried out locally, including by the Pentecostal pastor (assisted by a members of the church) and by a group based at the Seventh Day Adventist church.

I asked members at different churches if anything could be done for the Louis, Davey and Clara. While a few suggested, although perhaps not overwhelmingly enthusiastically, that their church could look at doing something about this through undertaking some form of exorcism, most felt that there was nothing that could be done. This largely stemmed from a perceived unwillingness of these individuals to want to help themselves, exorcism only working for those who wanted to recover- despite Clara's attendance at services she was perceived as not *really* wanting to recover. These afflicted individuals continued to undertake unchristian behaviour, and due to their family backgrounds such possession was perhaps in a sense inevitable. The only form of escape from family curses was to fully embrace the Lord and to distance onesself from the family. This had been undertaken by one local man who was the grandson of a woman who was one of the most powerful *obeahwomen* in the local area. This grandson had reported seeing his grandmother engage in a range of nefarious activities, including levitating and undertaking *obeah* rituals. Strange occurrences were present at her funeral and at her graveside, and the fact that it took her so long time to finally die was further evidence of her wickedness and involvement in the spirit realm. After her death, the grandson was finally able to fully embrace the Lord, although he was wary of the fact that her powerful spirit may continue to pester him. Removing oneself from such a situation was difficult, and rare, and relied on others in the village who might support and take in such an individual, believing that they really had accepted Jesus as their Lord and Saviour.

Cases of spirit possession were also speculated on for some forms of criminal behaviour. Given that those who were close to God of course did not commit violent crime or steal from people (to do so would take them further from God), it followed that those who did commit such crimes were closer to the Devil, and very possibly led by evil spirits to do such things. Particularly shocking crimes could be understood in this manner, as could crimes that were undertaken by people who were otherwise never known to do anything criminal. The high rates of crime and violence within Trinidad could be attributed to a level of possession, and linked to the fact that the Devil was working in the country. The high use of drugs, including the use of drugs locally (chiefly marijuana), was also tied to this- spirit oppression meant that users could not stop and therefore continued to become more connected to the Devil and led by evil spirits.

Committing crime while being a drug user were very closely connected therefore, as evil spirits led individuals to commit further ungodly actions- I was told in response to news stories that these criminals must be on drugs. Drugs were seen to alter the mind and thinking, although it was not always clear whether this was due to their pharmacological effect or through spirits, and for some people these were anyway connected, the spirits working through the pharmacological. These understandings were not limited to the local area as the following news story illustrates. Under the headline 'Convicted drug offender "Not me is the jumbie"', a man who was charged with possession of cocaine was reported to have told the magistrate that he got the drugs as he 'sometimes became possessed by a "spirit or jumbie"', he was reported as stating; "Sometimes I think I does have some kind of spirit or jumbie on me yes…"' (Newsday, Section A, Friday 24th February 2012, p13). Such a *jumbie* was the cause of him breaking the law, guiding him to buy cocaine.

Cases of mass possession

A few months before I arrived in Trinidad, there had been an appearance of mass spirit possession in Moruga, a village in the far south of Trinidad. Seventeen girls in Moruga Composite (High) School had become possessed, as they 'displayed behaviours thought to be of a spiritual nature' (Trinidad Guardian, Monday October 31st, 2011), a story also picked up by various international media outlets. The school was closed and priests, pastors and psychologists were called in. A year later the symptoms returned to the Moruga school, causing it to be shut down for some days again. This event was confirmed in the press by a named member of the Trinidad and Tobago Unified Teachers' Association who was reported as saying that:

> For the past two weeks, students have become extremely violent, speaking loudly in different voices and languages. He said that two Fridays ago, students began behaving violently outside of the school compound and the police were called in. 'But the police had to leave as the children became extremely violent. The Emergency Health Service (EHS) was also called in on another occasion as the students' condition was thought to be health related, but they could not subdue the children'

Ministry of Education officials and a psychiatrist were also reported as visiting the school,

> "The psychiatrist admitted that what they were dealing with is not physical but spiritual," the teacher who was in the meeting said. "He said they did not know how to deal with this situation". (Trinidad Guardian, Monday October 31st, 2011).[3]

I asked local community members about the possession in the school and most did not doubt its occurrence, particularly in a place like Moruga. Moruga was known throughout Trinidad to be heavily affected by spirits and was where people were said to go if they wanted to consult an *obeahman/woman*. This was very much the understanding of the local community also, and jokes referred to this, for example, 'She husband leave she, she real vex, she goin' Moruga!'.[4] Tobago and to a lesser extent, the northwest coast were also understood as places where *obeah* use may be more prevalent, but which were also known for other reasons (the coast for fishing and beaches, Tobago for

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[3] Although the date of this report is Halloween, no significance to this was seen locally. Halloween was seen as an American event, which encouraged and worshipped the devil. All Saints and All Souls days were recognised locally as important for Catholics and some others whose family members were buried in the Catholic graveyard. Over both nights, visits were usually made to the Catholic cemetery and candles lit for dead relatives. This was not (visibly) undertaken by more evangelical members of the community, who while they did not loudly disregard the practice, told me that the souls of relatives were not there and therefore it did no good to do this.

[4] The implication here is that she will go to Moruga to see an *obeahman/woman* to put something on him in punishment, or get him to return. If a man's girlfriend was from Moruga, or from Tobago, then you 'better watch youself' [better had watch out for yourself], as she might put *obeah* on you.

beaches and holidaying). However Moruga's reputation was for *obeah* over any other aspect of the place. That spiritual possession might occur in Moruga was no surprise therefore, although some community members also posited that there may have been a level at which this behaviour was being put on as a way for children to get out of going to school. Another theory I heard, although not within the village, was that Moruga had high rates of incest, and that such possession may be a reaction to this. Most community members reported that such events would not occur in their village. Later in my stay however, I learned that this might not have been the case.

There were reports from those closely involved in the local school system that there had also been cases of possession in the high school in the village. Such reports came from some teachers who were involved in the Seventh Day Adventists and Pentecostal churches who had formed a group that went to pray in the school some mornings to remove spirits that had entered the school. On another occasion I had been speaking to an Adventist at her home and her daughter returned early in the afternoon, reporting that there were possessions at the school again so she had come home. I asked what form such possessions had taken, and she, like others I spoke to on the matter, told me how students started acting out, being violent, throwing desks around. There was a sort of 'buzz' in the air and in fact, on the few occasions the daughter had taken her baby into school to show others, the baby had been unable to sleep, or displayed signs of discomfort in the evening following the visit. Some students were more affected than others, those who were 'far from God'. In fact, this was how many of the spirits had come to the school, brought in by students whose home lives were ungodly, whose family members did not attend church, or attended Spiritual Baptist (and sometimes Catholic) services, or who drank excessively. Teachers who were not from the local area (particularly Indo-Trinidadians, and therefore likely Hindu or Muslim) were also thought to bring in bad spirits. There were also reports, including in the junior schools, that on Hindu and Muslim religious holidays (such as Diwali and Eid, celebrated nationally and therefore also by local schools) possessions of a lesser kind may occur, with children acting up in relation to evil spirits that entered the schools during this time. Again spirits were removed by prayer groups from local evangelical churches, outside authorities were not involved and community members not attending such churches also appeared to have had little knowledge of such events.

As following non-Christian faiths was viewed by many as a form of devil-worship, other members of the population, including the government itself, were seen as being led by the Devil. This was not viewed as spirit possession but rather the possibility of spiritual influence, not necessarily followed unwillingly and not in the same category of spirit oppression or obsession- it was not an affliction so much as a relationship, like devil-worship. Spirit possession within other groups was viewed as present during religious services, and sometimes during religious celebrations, as spirits were welcomed in as form of worship. This was also the case for Carnival, though evil spirits may be around, they were not particularly seen as possessing people involuntarily during this time.

Spiritual afflictions, agency and cosmology

As may be expected, the lines between different spiritual afflictions were not clearly defined, but there were some key distinctions that could be drawn between such states however. These related to whether a spirit or spirits were inside the individual (spirit possession), if a spirit or spirits had caused the individual harm but did not remain inside them (spirit lash) or if a spirit or spirits were not inside the individual but were around them, pestering and influencing them (spirit oppression and spirit obsession, ‘tying’ would also fit into this category but was more transient that the former states and attracted less personal blame). Such experiences were found in both genders and in the young and old. Despite differences in categories and terms used locally, there remained a distinction in the degree of agency the individual retained- whether a spirit or many spirits had control over the whole mind and individual’s thinking, part of the mind or emotions, or whether the individual’s mind was unaffected while their body was. Littlewood's understanding of agency (2007) is that in probably all societies:

> …everyday action is immediately understood and experienced as volitional- as the freely chosen and generally rational action of an adult person acting with full agency…with prior stable and coherent plans of action…and with 'ownership' of emotions, self, memory and will (2007, p.99)

Restriction on such agency might come about through particular constraints- by illness for example, by other people's actions, by limited resources or through madness. In Trinidad, as also noted by Littlewood, people were held accountable for their actions, decisions and movements. It was understood that a person could think before acting and that they were responsible and accountable for actions (2007, p99). Spiritual afflictions were understood to impinge on individual agency, so that the range of spiritual afflictions may be viewed as a sort of scale, or continuum of impeded agency, from spirit lashes with 'no impeded agency', through spirit oppression and spirit obsession with 'partly impeded agency' to spirit possession with 'fully impeded agency'.[5]

The understanding of afflictions caused by spirits inhabiting the body can be linked to wider understandings of spirits in Caribbean religious practices as being able to lead and impact on human thinking and emotions. However religious experiences were not viewed as the same as spirit possession, although they were seen to be connected. Spirit possession was a negative

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[5] These concepts of spiritual affliction appear similar to the notion of 'vice' found by Littlewood during his fieldwork in Trinidad (1988; 1993). Littlewood suggests that 'vice' can be glossed as 'addiction'- excessive drinking and thieving, among other actions, being classed as this. Littlewood describes vices as socially unacceptable behaviour patterns, 'moral offenses' that interfere with the everyday natural order of social life and which may eventually lead to madness (1988). Vices appear similar to notions of spirit oppression or obsession, which may lead to full spirit possession (madness), a state similar to Littlewood's description of 'madness'. While Littlewood's fieldwork was undertaken in the 1980s, and given the growth of evangelical Christianity in the area since that time, interpretations of similar distinctions may now have acquired a more spiritual foundation.

experience with evil spirits affecting the agency of the individual, more aligned with illness than with worship, and something that the individual suffered with and was unable to control. In religious practices, spirits were encouraged to enter the body, and control was given over to the spirit. Such surrendering of personal agency might be a complete renunciation- as was the case in Orisha work, others were more partial, for example in Pentecostal and Spiritual Baptist services. These experiences usually lasted only for the duration of the religious event or for an otherwise short duration if experienced outside of services,[6] Spiritual afflictions were not time-limited experiences of the type that might be found in religious services therefore, but were part of everyday life, the spirit afflicting individuals on a daily basis.[7]

Links between religious experience and possession by evil spirits were mostly made by the more evangelical Christian village members. They viewed the experiences of spirit manifestations found in Orisha work (and for some people in the village, also the spirit manifestations experienced by Spiritual Baptists), as forms of possession by evil spirits where worshippers welcomed such spirits onto or into themselves. Such practices were viewed as forms of devil-worship, with possession occurring by devilish spirits. These were viewed as completely different to the manifestations of the Holy Spirit found in Pentecostal churches for example, where there was only one godly spirit which entered those attending. Lucinda, a member of the Pentecostal church had previously been a Spiritual Baptist (a practice she now saw as devilish), and she compared the two experiences

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[6] Although involvement in Orisha work might occasionally result in a spirit remaining within a person. This remaining spirit would then cause a problem with spirit possession and I was told by the only person locally who was an Orisha-worker that he had seen this occur in someone he had previously drummed with at an Orisha gathering.

[7] It should also be noted that the term ‘possessed’ had a derogatory meaning that was used more generally- an individual acting in a silly or inappropriate way might also be called ‘possessed’ without the suggestion that they were actually suffering from spiritual affliction, they were acting *like* they were possessed. I heard people use this term frequently, for example in referring to a child who was running around or ‘acting up’.

> 'Anointing'[8] of the Holy Spirit operates in the individual spirit, the comforter leads us to all truth. You alone [the person experiencing it] can describe the experience, [it is an] experience more than explanation. Anointing [is] such an amazing experience, feels like [you] could die and go to heaven… [In the] Spiritual Baptist church, [you] get a feeling but different to anointing of the Holy Spirit…completely different experience, [they] may look the same but certain signs you have to look for [that demonstrate a difference]. Anointing of the Holy Spirit [you] can't experience when you have sin, anointing convicts [convinces] you not to sin, it will feel guilt in you, feel urge to repent and don't feel like want to go back, it not like that in Spiritual Baptist [services], living together and not being married don't affect manifestation [of the spirit within you] (Conversation with Lucinda, April 2012)[9]

The differences between Spiritual Baptist experiences[10] and Pentecostal experiences were not seen as so great by some Spiritual Baptists, rather being seen as different forms of manifestation by the Holy Spirit. Community members who linked spiritual afflictions to followers of Orisha and the Spiritual Baptist faith, were also commenting on the moral position of these churches and their disapproval of the faith. While spirits were often seen as being brought into the body, spiritual affliction was also brought on to one's self through incompetent attempts to use *obeah*. In these cases, individuals conjured up *obeah* spirits to do their bidding, but then were unable to control them leading to possession or other spiritual affliction. Of course successful *obeah* brought spirits on to others,

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[8] Being 'anointed' by the Holy Spirit refered to being entered by the Holy Spirit.

[9] For a more in depth examination of the experience of spirits in the body see Lynch, 2015.

[10] In Laitenin's book on the religion, she suggests that experiences of the manifestation of the Holy Spirit in Spiritual Baptists includes 'movements, sounds, facial expressions, unknown tongues, dance styles, shouting, the use of ritual emblems and other bodily expressions' (2000:213) which take place in services and at rituals and 'give concrete form to the intelligible level of the Spiritual' (2000:*ibid*).

and impeded agency was enough to stop someone doing well without taking them out altogether, although this could also occur.

Ultimately, spiritual affliction was somewhat the fault of afflicted individuals themselves- if the individual was close to God they should not be severely affected. The backgrounds of those who were affected, particularly those with full spirit possession, were understood to be morally dubious, and sometimes, explicitly immoral. Afflictions did not often bring sympathy and thus may limit people's willingness to discuss such experiences. Experiences of tying and spirit lashes did not imply the same level of spiritual weakness and distance from God, indeed a robust level of spiritual strength may mean that *only* a spirit lash was experienced, rather than spirit oppression. These experiences were more readily discussed and did not attract the same degree of stigma. However, for an individual who was known for being particularly spiritually strong, and/or held a particularly high moral position in the community, for example a priest or pastor, admitting to being tied or encountering a spirit lash were more damaging.

Freedom, agency and the body

While cosmological understandings constructed a world where God was in control but with the Devil always present, it crucially also allowed for, and placed great emphasis on individual human agency. Individuals were rewarded or punished (for example by spiritual affliction) for acting 'morally' or 'sinfully' depending on whether they followed God or the Devil. Thus the individual was able to influence and have some level of control over the outcome of their own behaviour, in contrast to the little socio-political agency they had to affect their wider social and economic circumstances.

While individuals had free will, they were also subject to the will of God, and the outcome of individual action within this context was due both to individual action and God's wishes. God could be relied upon (unlike the State) to act justly, and a negative occurrence might be as necessary for the individual in the long term as a positive one was in the short term. Church services and people in the village regularly told each other to trust in God and not question what his plans were. Individuals might recount how they felt led to do something without knowing why, or God appeared to put something in their way, for example not letting them get a particular job, only for God's purpose to be revealed later. It was again down the individual to trust and follow God's direction, God's will being separate to individual will.

The freedom to choose between God and the Devil were key aspects to local cosmology therefore. Spiritual affliction impeded on such an ability stopping individuals from acting righteously, encouraging 'bad' and 'evil' behaviour. Spiritual affliction impeded the usual freedom to make decisions and take control over actions. Such afflictions were the consequence of being away from God (and godly behaviour) and were seen as a form of punishment of such. That a loss of agency, choice and personal control was locally viewed as a form of punishment was perhaps particularly salient in relation to Trinidad's history of slavery and colonialism. Such a history may perhaps result in a greater emphasis on the value of freedom and unimpeded agency for the individual, a loss of which brings connotations of the position of slaves beholden to a powerful master, and is punishment indeed.[11]

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[11] Anthropologists have noted that knowledge of *obeah*, based on West African understandings of witches and spirits, was developed by slaves brought to Trinidad, with the term *obeah* linked to the Ashanti words *Obayifo* or *obeye* meaning wizards or witches, or the spirit beings that dwell within witches (Paton and Forde, 2012; Fernandez Olmos and Paravisini-Gebert, 2011). *Obeah* was used against slave masters and other slaves to impede them, and on the self to increase personal power and control. *Obeah* has been viewed as form of resistance to slavery as slaves attempted to increase control over their masters and their circumstances (Fernandez Olmos and Paravisini-Gebert, 2011). Slavery and the decreased agency that accompanied it, and the link to use of spiritual intervention to impede others and improve self, suggest a historical connection between spiritual power and impaired agency. This suggests too that Trinidad's background of slavery, then followed by indentured labour and colonialism, all of which removed power from the local and imposed control from external forces, has perhaps reverberations on contemporary Trinidadian cosmological understandings- spirits may be controlled but they can also control individuals. This historical influence is further suggested by Miller who suggests experiences of freedom and emancipation are placed at a premium in Trinidad (Miller, 1991). I argue that similarly agency, free will and ability to act, was also placed at a premium, the choice made between following God or the Devil indicating moral positioning, and is perhaps more stressed than in other societies who did not experience such a degree of restriction on agency.

Given the many different choices that were part of everyday life, individuals chose to follow God or the Devil in their actions many times each day- this was not a one-off decision but a continual direction that needed to be constantly monitored and undertaken, in the same way that the body was also constantly changing and needed monitoring. Continual choices made to follow God was also a constant renewal of the individual's link to God. As Meyer suggested of Pentecostal Christians in Ghana (1999), such work had to be undertaken daily in order to maintain this relationship. The freedom to make choices which then affected the body and actions, were therefore also continually shaping the bodies and individual practices, as the need to make, and the consequences of making, such choices, were lived and embodied on a daily basis.

Conceptualizing spiritual afflictions in Trinidad

Over time, anthropological studies in spirit possession have moved from a rationalizing and reductive approach that medicalizes possession (and which allows for cross-cultural comparison), to a greater focus on the local cultural context in which possession occurs and which may take into account the more religious elements of the experience (Boddy, 1994).[12] In this context, spirit possession affected agency as is seen elsewhere, but this agency came from both mind and heart, thinking and emotion, and so spirit possession also implied an emotional element, individuals being led by both thoughts and feelings. A view of possession that privileges a mind-body split so that spiritual affliction is located as situated in the mind rather than the body therefore fails to take account of the connected locations of body, mind and heart that were understood in the village and in other parts of the Caribbean (see for example Sobo's work on Jamaica, 1993).

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[12] Spirit possession has long been a topic of anthropological enquiry of course (e.g. Bourguignon, 1965; Gomm, 1975; Ong, 1987; Lewis, 1989; Boddy, 1989; 1994). It should also be noted that some more recent papers have returned to approaching possession from a more medical, cognition-based, neuroscience-informed perspective, albeit in a different way to earlier work, e.g. Seligman, 2005; Seligman and Kirmayer, 2008; Cohen and Barrett, 2008.

Spiritual affliction can be viewed as the very embodiment of reduced agency, a perspective that might also be tied to wider anthropological understandings of possession experiences. Boddy makes the point that while possession experiences are disembodied, they are also embodied at the same time (1994). She suggests that individuals who are particularly constrained socially may be particularly affected, but such a link may also be productive- those particularly affected by spiritual affliction may then become particularly constrained socially. Certainly the backgrounds of afflicted individuals in the village, and the moral judgments that accompany these, suggest a connection. I therefore follow the work of other anthropologists who have suggested that social difficulties imbedded across society may be imbued within some individuals as a form of illness.[13] The high levels of stress and anxiety present in wider Trinidadian society- the social body- may be incorporated into particular individual bodies as spiritual afflictions. As well as being individually incorporated, these social anxieties may also be *ascribed* as being incorporated within individuals, for example in the understanding that criminal behaviour and violence were caused by spiritual affliction. In a culture where unimpeded agency is at a premium, experiences of spiritual affliction may have real social meaning. What might be called 'symptoms' of such experiences- perceived lack of personal agency and control- as well as the explanation and understanding of such symptoms, have cultural significance in the Trinidadian context. Such experiences, and understanding of these, do not form any part of resistance to dominant power structures but instead are culturally meaningful expressions of distress and dissatisfaction with everyday socio-cultural circumstances.

Through such a lens, spiritual afflictions might be viewed as an 'idiom of distress', a term introduced and developed by Nichter in his 1981 and 2010 papers, to define 'socially and culturally resonant means of experiencing and expressing distress in local worlds' (Nichter, 2010, p.405). Nichter notes that such idioms communicate states of experience that may range from 'the mildly

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[13] For example see Littlewood (2002) and for a historical perspective, Littlewood and Dein (2000).

stressful to depths of suffering that render individuals and groups incapable of functioning as productive members of society' (Nichter, 2010, p.405). Distress, being severely upset, can be understood as part of the range of human emotions, distinguishable from bereavement, and part of being human (Littlewood, personal communication). The components of distress of course vary cross-culturally both in terms of the causes of distress relating to cultural circumstances (e.g. the strict Muslim parent who is distressed that their child wishes to marry a Christian), and the expression of that distress relating to the cultural norms and expectations of different societies (Kirmayer, 1989).[14] Littlewood suggests these idioms might also be described as 'stylized expressive traditional behaviours' which have moderately similar presentation, can be time-limited and while going against everyday 'normal' behaviour are condoned within the culture as an expression of distress (2002). Key readings of possession experiences have thus viewed these as forms of resistance, as 'weapons of the weak',[15] albeit as a form of unconscious protest (Lewis, 1989; Gomm, 1975; Ong, 1988; Littlewood, 2002).

The key display of such experiences in Trinidad, however, was impeded thinking that resulted in socially deviant, or unexplainable (in terms of what was appropriate socially) actions, which allowed spiritual affliction to be conceptualized as such. Spiritual afflictions as a form of explanation for such behaviour was an important element of its use, firmly assigning cause as due to immoral persons, rather than any wider social or structural issue- the individual was responsible and largely attracted blame rather than sympathy, the stress being on the *cause* of the affliction rather than the experience or the result.

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[14] The notion of 'idioms of distress' has started to replace the term 'culture-bound syndromes' which was previously used to refer to conditions largely described by anthropologists in their encounters with the 'exotic'. The term 'culture bound syndromes' has been much criticised not only as it gives a bounded label suggesting that a particular disorder may only be found in an individual from a particular area, but also due to the limited evidence of the existence of the some of these disorders termed 'cultural bound syndromes' (Littlewood, 2002). Such critiques led to a change that viewed these as culturally specific collections of symptoms and culturally constituted means of displaying distress.

[15] A term Scott takes up in relation to his work on everyday forms of peasant resistance in Malaysia (1985), spirit possession has been interpreted as a form of resistance to wider socio-political structural hierarchies.

Spirits did not only cause spiritual afflictions but also other illnesses, the Devil working to create disorder in the body through a range of means. Treatment for all ailments was also only seen to work through God's will- spiritual affliction was not a separate case but embedded in other wider understandings about sickness, misfortune and the world more generally. Such experiences were expressed through the material- God and the Devil influencing the material world, including the human body. Bodily experiences more broadly reinforced cosmological understandings as morality and other cosmological ideas could be seen to be expressed through these. One of the ways in which individuals came to know about the cosmological was therefore through the body. Spiritual afflictions, as well as other bodily experiences, shaped understandings of the cosmological and thus were embedded within daily living and the construction of everyday life. The treatment and healing of spiritual and other afflictions were also shaped by understandings of morality and the cosmological world, and various approaches were taken to dealing with these.

7. Treatment and healing

Heading towards the main cross-roads in the village from my residence, I always passed Hayley's house where she lived alone. Usually the door would be open and if I could see Hayley sitting by her electric fan listening to a Christian service on the radio, I would call out to her, wave or go over to chat if time allowed. Hayley was one of the oldest members of the village and was in her late ninties. She was always enthusiastic for conversation, particularly about the *ol'time*. This was the time of her childhood and she remembered it well, including the visit to the village by the anthropologists Herskovits and Herskovits, and the song that she sang for them. Hayley had always been active in the Anglican church, although now she was largely unable to make it to services. She was also known locally for her substantial knowledge of bush medicine. Over many years she had cultivated her own garden to grow particular bush which she used to treat her own sicknesses and those of other people. She mourned the loss of many plants that she had previously been able to use for treatments but which were no longer grown, or accessible locally, since the estates had become so overgrown and were fairly impenetrable.

Hayley was very aware of how things had changed in the village, not only in terms of availability of medicinal plants and employment but also in people's lack of respect for others and their property. She found it upsetting that younger people and people from outside the area stole mangos from her trees and many plants she used to grow for medicine had also been taken or destroyed. Despite Hayley's age and inability to stop people from stealing from her, she had a sharp mind and could remember and reel off numerous bush medicines for particular ailments- *Christmas bush* for colds, *wonder of the world* leaf for cooling. Not as well known as Mrs Pavy, a now-deceased resident of a nearby village who had written a book on bush medicine (and which I had read in the UWI library), she was sought out by other residents in the village- particularly family members- for advice on which bush to use for which afflictions.

Many people were familiar with bush treatments such as *lemongrass* or *Christmas bush* for colds, and it was usual for neighbours to ask each other for advice. Some neighbours, like Hayley, were recognized as knowing more than others. Hayley had spent much of her life working on and near the estates so knew about agriculture more generally, and like many of the older members of the village, had learned from her own parents and grandparents. Younger people in contemporary times were perceived as being less interested in these older ways of life however, and in the knowledge passed down from previous generations.

Hayley also gained much of her knowledge of bush medicine from God as God communicated with her through dreams to tell her which ailment should be treated with which bush.[1] It was a gift that she had received from God and which He had intended that she should use to help people (although not to charge money for as she would therefore lose this gift). Her continual communication and relationship with God through prayer, talking to God, Bible readings and celebrations through song, meant that she was able to continue to use and recommend bush treatments to people.

Paula was in her seventies and also knew many different bush remedies, calling herself a 'herbal medical practitioner'. She told me she had learned her skills from her parents who, unlike other parents, had told her and her siblings *why* they were administering a particular treatment rather than just doing it. If someone had problems falling asleep, for example, they did not just say 'here, drink this' but would tell their children that they were drinking *soursop*. Paula told me that she and her husband did not use medicines or similar products at all- instead of toothpaste they used salt which was also good for gums, *shining bush* as lip-balm, rosemary to keep insects out of their clothing and Paula also made her own shampoo from *aloes* and *ratchet* (cactus).

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[1] This can be seen as similar to the ways in which those Spiritual Baptists (who discover through going down to mourn that they have the gift for healing) learn about how to heal.

Unlike Hayley, Paula specialized in producing particular treatments and had a small production line where she produced medicinal teas that she sold. I often helped her with this by packing teabags in the boxes that she had created. Her main products were *noni* tea for cleansing the blood and to lower high blood pressure, and *catclaw* for prostate cancer. Paula was interested in the pharmaceutical effects of the bush she used, noting that *noni* could be used to promote new cell growth and that *noni* wine was effective for strains. Paula had given advice and worked with medical doctors and other groups who were interested in herbal medical treatments. She told me that she learned from these groups that biomedical doctors have a vested interest in not letting people know about the effectiveness of these herbs, as they would otherwise be out of work. She regularly used and prepared bush teas for herself and others so I also had the opportunity to experience Paula's treatments. I drank *noni* tea when I visited her and when I had hurt my wrist following long conversations where I had taken lots of notes, Paula gave me *noni* wine (wine Paula had made from *noni* fruit) to apply to my wrist, and then wrapped a *noni* leaf around it, fastening it with masking tape.

Like Hayley, Paula understood that her knowledge of bush medicine had come from God who had blessed her throughout her life, which meant she was able to learn about bush medicine from her parents and through her own research. It was not that God had delivered her a spiritual gift as Hayley saw herself as being given, instead Paula felt led by God as to which bush to use for medicine, as she did about other matters in her everyday life. She did not report being guided by visions and dreams in the same way that Hayley did. For Hayley, her dreams about other matters had also been prophetic while Paula declared 'only God know what [will] happen'. Both Hayley and Paula communicated with God each day, Hayley sang and said Anglican prayers while Paula, who had been brought up Catholic but had later turned to the Evangelical church, said less formalized prayers but nonetheless prayed regularly. Paula and her husband used to attend the Evangelical church in the village but now attended no church regularly. As Paula pointed out however, she and her husband had strong relationships with God and lived their faith in their everyday lives, whereas some other people in the village attended church but did not pray or maintain a close relationship with God.

Approaches to treating sicknesses

Trinidad, like other Caribbean islands, has a strong background of bush medicine. It has been suggested that this was developed by slaves, who received little other medical assistance, and combined West African understandings and experimentation with plants found locally to discover which were effective (Lagurre, 1987; Payne-Jackson & Alleyne, 2004). These plants were usually steeped in hot water to make *tisannes* (teas) that were then drunk or wrapped around parts of the body, sometimes having heated these gently to release their juices (as occurred with Paula's treatment of my wrist). Knowledge of bush medicine was passed around locally and some people were seen as particularly knowledgeable. However knowledge of bush medicine had never become a formalized system. While there were bush teas that were used commonly for the same problem (for example *lemongrass* for colds), there were many others that varied in what they were used for. Often the quantities used also varied- this was not an exact science and use was not necessarily prescribed.

Many people shared their knowledge of bush medicine with me and notable among these was Edmond. He intermittently attended the Independent International Baptist Church but his whereabouts were otherwise sketchy as he was on the run from the police for owing money for child support. He therefore spent lots of time in the bush and near the deserted areas of the beach, and had access to, and a great deal of knowledge about, the types of bush that grew nearby. He could also gather some of the bush that others were not able to get to. Edmond's bush treatments therefore included a wider range than other people I spoke to. Edmond had found using one bush, cannabis, was helpful for spiritual enlightenment. He found this particularly beneficial in undertaking Bible study. Like a number of people in the village, Edmond stated that God had created bush medicine- He had created all plants needed to resolve all medical problems in the world, humans just needed to find and use them. Bush medicine was a way in which God had provided for people locally, and for the slaves in previous times.

Linked to bush medicine were wider understandings of agriculture- when to sow, plant, water and pick. Early evening was said to be the best time to pick bush for medicine- it was a time when plants were most receptive to being picked. In the *ol'time*, people might have also said some words- described as particular ‘prayers’- to ask the plants’ permission to pick their leaves. The use of *blue* (blue washing powder) to combat the effects of evil eye was also tied to bush medicine knowledge, as well as to the construction of talismen and other objects that would ward off illness or evil. Particular oils could be bought in pharmacies which, together with other plants, could be made into ointments and formed the ingredients for ‘bush baths’. There was a cross-over therefore with elements of bush medicine and elements of Spiritual Baptist healing which for some people had associations with *obeah*. But different treatments had different associations- bush baths were seen as being closer to *obeah* practices than bush teas for example. For those in the village, there was also therefore a difference between people who had a good knowledge of bush- mainly teas- and those who drew on other aspects of bush medicine to address more explicitly spiritual problems. It was not only God who had the ability to heal, but also the Devil who tried to mimic God. While I initially found it difficult to understand why the Devil would want to heal, I was told that this could become a way of a person being linked to the Devil and the Devil claiming their soul- the person (and sometimes also the healer) might *think* that they were healing with the help of God, but actually this was the Devil who was ‘tying’ the person to him (in the same way that *obeah* was used to ‘tie’). While Hayley, Paula, Mrs Pavy and Edmond were seen to be in the category of bush healers whose bush did not focus on curing spiritual problems and were led by God in their work, Jemima's healing was at best ambiguous, and for some explicitly connected to the Devil.

Jemima was in her late seventies and lived outside the village, along the side of the winding road that led to the next village along the coast. A member of the Spiritual Baptist church (but not either of the two in the village, she attended a church further up the coast), she ran a food and drinks stall where tourists on the way to the coast would often stop. She was mainly known for her healing abilities however, which some people saw as connected to *obeah*. Most of her patients came from outside the village and people got to know about her through word of mouth. As mentioned earlier, many rural areas of Trinidad had a reputation for being linked to *obeah* and Jemima would have been one of those people that those from outside the area would enquire after.[2]

Jemima saw herself as 'a spiritual doctor' and she had learned bush medicine as God had showed this to her in visions which she had had since she first went she down mourn as a Spiritual Baptist (when she was given the gift of healing). When Jemima saw a basket in a vision she would 'take [her] lesson like a student in class'- she would hold the basket and pick out items from this one at a time, on each occasion asking God what they were for and God would then tell her. She made a distinction between knowing 'bush' and knowing 'real medicine' which involved 'spiritual learning'. She worked particularly with spiritual problems, as well as with bush, and due to her connection with God (who had given her this gift and therefore she had to share this), whenever anyone explicitly came to ask her for help she had to assist them. She told me that this was the arrangement she had come to with God. Like Hayley therefore, Jemima saw herself as having a gift directly from God. She told me that she was 'bright spiritually, not carnally', that she could not read well as she had not

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[2] An outsider looking for an *obeahman/woman* would usually involve them asking broadly in the village if they 'knew anyone'. The context in which someone from the village might 'know' someone and in relation to what, was not articulated but the meaning was clear. Sayeed would take great enjoyment in directing these people towards Dominic's house who was the local Anglican minister. Here the subtle implication was that Dominic was actually an *obeahman*, something sure to embarrass and annoy Dominic once the visitor arrived on his doorstep.

had much schooling. She had been born spiritually gifted and as a child used to call her parents to see ‘people in the sky’, visions which only she could see. She looked after her gift as she told me that when God gives you something you should be careful with it, or it will be taken away again.

Like other people such as bone-setters (found in other parts of Trinidad), and those who used physical manipulation of the body to address illnesses, Jemima was part of a group of people who might be seen as a healer or an *obeah* worker, a slightly ambiguous group mostly used by people who did not come from the area in which they worked. While individuals with particular skills might attract people from long distances, a distinct advantage of going to see someone away from the village was that the visit would be more confidential, as Judith mentions in Chapter 4- not only would people be less likely to know what was afflicting people but arguments as to whether someone was practicing *obeah* or not did not have to be engaged with, as others (theoretically) would not know that such a consultation had taken place. Jemima’s connection to the Spiritual Baptist church and the way that she explicitly drew on ‘spiritual learning’ in her treatments, separated her from the approaches of Hayley and Paula who focused more on plants and being guided by God. Because of this, it was less easy to incorporate Jemima and people with similar approaches into more evangelical understandings of health, illness and treatment. Hayley and Paula’s healing were easier to position morally in this cosmology.

In addition to community bush medicine experts, commercialized bush or herbal medicines were also available. Some of these could be bought in pharmacies or in specialized shops in Sangre Grande or downtown Port of Spain, and there were many signs advertising such treatments in these places and along roadsides. Many of these signs emphasized improvements to sexual performance and were advertised to men, alluding to this by stressing that these medicines gave ‘vigour’, ‘energy’ and ‘strength’. As mentioned in Chapter 5, Shirley, a Seventh Day Adventist woman sold commercial bush medicines in the village. These were produced and bottled elsewhere and she brought them up to sell locally from a shop attached to the post office. The ingredients on the bottles were not fully described but they clearly stated which ailments they cured, a list which included AIDS and cancer. In other areas of Trinidad, typically among the better-off in more urban areas, new alternative therapies such as yoga, psychosynthesis and Thai massage were becoming increasingly popular. During my time in the field the first and second annual events promoting these and other therapies were held in Port of Spain's main conference and performance venue. These treatments also often included a spiritual element but were expensive, beyond the income of most of those in the village and were not forms of healing that were used, or engaged with, by people locally.

There was a biomedical centre based in the village which ran outpatient clinics throughout the week and had just started to offer fitness classes aimed specifically at people with diabetes. For more specialist care and hospital stays, including obstetric services, people needed to travel by maxi-taxi or bus to Sangre Grande (over an hour away), or head to the larger hospitals in Port of Spain or along the East-West Corridor. Ambulances would also have to come from Sangre Grande to the local villages if needed. More complex biomedical treatments took place out of the immeadiate area of the village therefore, and local clinical care focused more on maintenance of existing conditions (such as diabetes) and less drastic issues (such as basic wounds). The doctors who worked at the clinic were not from the area and at the time of my stay were also not from Trinidad. Instead these doctors were from Cuba with one from Nigeria, all of whom lived in the doctor's accommodation next to the clinic and were perceived not to mix with people in the village. These doctors rotated, staying for a few months at a time and did not attend village events so people did not talk of building relationships with them. Others who worked at the clinic- nurses, security guards and cleaners- were from the local area and so were more integrated with the community, with some people complaining to me that they could therefore relate details of patients' health to others. One of the nurses at this centre was a member of the Seventh Day Adventist church and gave health and medical advice as part of special services for church members. This included what to eat- that the Caribbean diet was very loaded with carbohydrates and church members should look to include more green vegetables in their food. These health promotion lessons were taken seriously by the church which prided itself on the good health of its congregation and its focus on health and diet, particularly in relation to the other churches.

Spiritual healing for particular afflictions was sought on a local level but more frequently on a national level. Since the arrival of the new pastor and taking place about once a month, the nearby Pentecostal church Sunday service ended with a deliverance service for those who were suffering afflictions, as the new pastor had some ability in this area. These were not regular and necessarily predictable events, and occurred a number of hours after the service had started so it would have been difficult for someone who did not regularly attend to come just for these services. Such deliverance services were led up to in the preceding hours- following Bible study those leading the singing would go through the songs they had selected. They built tempo and sound over a number of hours, being led by the Holy Spirit as to how long particular parts of songs were sung for and in the movements and directions that emerged from these. Some of those attending were also led by the Holy Spirit to dance in the aisles or to speak in tongues. The pastor's sermon would come a little later, again encouraging people to stand, pray, dance and be led by the spirit. On some occasions and following this the pastor would lead the deliverance, calling for those who were afflicted by demons to come forward to have these removed. This also included people giving testimonies about previously removed demons.

In every deliverance service I attended the same lady, Miriam, a woman from a nearby village, was one of the first to get up and head to the front to have demons removed from her by the pastor. The pastor was assisted by members of the inner circle of the church, who supported those who came up. The pastor used touch to cast the spirits out and while some bodies appeared to have little visible reaction to this (mostly male bodies), for others the casting out of spirits caused the body to buckle and collapse. Like Miriam, their bodies fell backwards, caught by two women whose role it was to help people ‘slain by the [Holy] spirit’. They would move those affected to a seat at the side of the church, all the while making sure that the women’s skirts did not ride up and kept the dignity of the wearer in tact. The two women were kept busy during many of the services, and sometimes needed to attend to the afflicted Miriam more than once. I also heard comments being made by some of the members of the congregation about the frequency with which Miriam was afflicted and her reaction- this was seen as unusual and rather suspicious as she appeared to be suffering more that someone would be expected to.

These local deliverance services were on a small scale however, and larger services (with a pastor thought to be very gifted in this area) could be sought out elsewhere in Trinidad. Healing specialists from other churches were also based in elsewhere in Trinidad. Monasteries in Port of Spain offered space for guidance, reflection and prayer and a well-known Catholic monastery in the centre of Trinidad, Mount St. Benedict, attracted people from across Trinidad and beyond, both Catholics and non-Catholics alike. The monks held counselling sessions for people to ask for help, guidance and prayer. A row of counselling rooms led off a central waiting room, which also contained a barrel of holy water. This holy water was used by monks for blessings, and visitors could also visit and attend services in the chapel at the monastery. Sessions could involve a priest listening to someone’s problems, talking these through and praying with the person. As such these seemed to be more focused on talking and guidance, helping understanding rather than ‘cure’. In the village, those from the more evangelical churches would talk about how Mount St. Benedict was used in the same way that people used *obeah*- asking priests to remove *obeah* from objects as one would an *obeahman/woman*, undertaking Catholic rituals (like the rosary, a novena, or hail Marys) to remove *obeah* instead of *obeah* rituals, and using holy water as a protective entity as one would a talisman. Again for some more evangelical Christians, there was a link between this Catholic monastery and *obeah*, the two being seen to be able to sit together with some ease as Catholic rituals were equated with *obeah* rituals (and were absent from Protestant praxis).

In addition to these Catholic monasteries, there were other sites of religious importance and events within Trinidad, including three priests able to conduct exorcisms in Trinidad as well as other exorcism specialists. However as far as I knew, people locally did not visit these sites and Catholic specialists. There were occasional Pentecostal deliverance road-shows that came to villages further south along the coast and which some of those in the village attended. It was explained to me that there was more excitement about these when these deliverance events first started, with people along the coastal villages attending and seemingly being cured during the services. However such ‘cures’ did not always last long, and I was told about one local person otherwise restricted to a wheelchair who got up and took a step during the road-show but afterwards was unable to leave the chair again, and was in much pain from his earlier effort. I was told a similar story about someone who had cast off their glasses during the event, only to need them again later. The longer-term outcomes of those ‘cured’ during these road-shows was evident to those in the local community who knew each other well, and people were less enthusiastic about these than they had initially been, although they were still generally well-attended.

Some people joined the Adventist church and other churches through looking to be healed or to help them understand a period of sickness. Success in terms of recovery and through the understanding of the afflicted person, and in terms of the afflicted person adding to church numbers, would be talked about as evidence of God’s power. For example, Sienna and her family entered the Pentecostal church after the sudden loss of her son aged 17, feeling led towards the church and the church helping her understand that her son was an angel, summoned to be with God. Clara, as has previously been mentioned, sought a cure for her spirit possession by attending all the churches in the village at different times, while Claire started to attend services at the Seventh

Day Adventist church in the latter stages of cancer. The Adventist church asked people to pray for her, and collected money to buy her a juicer and fresh fruit so that she might be able to work towards recovery through drinking healthy juices.

At all churches, members of the congregation who were sick or suffering were prayed for, as well as other national figures who might need God's help and guidance (such as members of the family of someone who had died, or members of the government meeting to discuss a particular piece of legislation). Church representatives visited those who were sick, in the Catholic church members going to pray and undertake a novena with people. People who had stopped attending the churches might also be visited to check on their wellbeing and to encourage them to return to services if they were not being kept away through illness. A contribution towards the cost of medical treatment might also be made by churches, so that church support for a sick person might be emotional, spiritual *and* financial. This system could also be taken advantage of however, and I was told about a former member of the Catholic church who was encouraged to leave after it became apparent that their child was not as ill as they had suggested and they had received quite a sum from the church towards costs associated with the child's care which in the end they kept for themselves.

Prayer was important for whatever health issue was being suffered from, God being in control of everything and illnesses caused by the Devil. Being a good Christian could protect individuals and help them recover so developing and reinforcing the sick person's own relationship with God through regular communication such as through prayer, was also encouraged. As more people praying for something was also understood to make the prayer more effective, convincing church congregations, as well as other friends and family, to include the sick person in their prayers was important. Medical interventions, be they bush medicine, biomedically-based or other were also only understood to work through God allowing them to do so, and prayer was also therefore important for other treatments to be effective.

Diagnosis and use of more than one approach

On one visit to the Community Centre, the women who worked there and I chatted about bush medicines. Between them they could give a wide range of plants and their uses, but they also included aspirin on their list, not as a bush medicine but as a treatment for 'thick blood'. In this discussion, aspirin was not opposite or supplementary to bush medicines, but was another option of many for people to use from a mixed armoury of treatments. Sometimes it was clear that one particular approach should be used over another, for example cases of trauma would be addressed using biomedicine, cold or flu symptoms would be largely addressed with bush medicine, and cases of spirit possession dealt with through exorcism or deliverance services. The different immediate causes of these problems indicated the treatment that should be used, but while a particular interpretation might be that bush medicine, exorcism, and deliverance addressed only problems that were beyond the limits of biomedicine, such a clear division did not work in practice. There was not such a split in reality between these medical approaches. Bush medicine to reduce sugar in the blood (such as *periwinkle*) might be taken alongside biomedical treatment for diabetes, or instead of this, or for a period one might be used and then the other. In some cases of spirit possession, anti-psychotic drugs might be useful in addressing the symptoms, if not the cause of the possession,[3] and the use of these did not preclude exorcism treatments also being worked on the individual. Problems with the use of more than one treatment at a time were noted by some people, for example in the case of diabetes. A number of people in the village told me that patients often would not reveal to biomedical staff that they were also taking bush medicine to reduce their levels of blood sugar knowing that biomedical staff were dismissive of these treatments. However, this was also seen to be problematic because the use of the bush medicine meant that the biomedical readings of blood sugar could be inaccurate. The bush medicine reduced the amount of visible sugar in the blood without addressing the main

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[3] That such drugs were only effective as long as they were taken merely went to prove that the underlying cause of the problem was a spiritual affliction, as could be seen with Louis and Davey (Chapter 6).

cause, and therefore the quantity of medication prescribed by the biomedical clinic might be too little to be effective. This understanding did not dispute that either were effective for treating sugar in the blood, but that using both at the same time could cause problems.

Diagnosis as to the cause of specific ailments may also cross medical approaches, and more than one framework might be drawn on for directing treatment. A biomedical diagnosis of a condition, for example diabetes, might have been reached through tests undertaken at the local clinical centre however once this diagnosis was known, bush medicine for diabetes might be used instead of, or in addition to, the medication prescribed by the clinic. Paula told me of someone who regularly bought *catclaw* tea from her to promote their urine flow following their diagnosis of prostrate cancer, while they also undertook biomedical treatment. Her *noni* tea was useful for people who had previously had cancer, she told me, as this promoted cellular growth following radiotherapy or chemotherapy. In these cases the biomedical diagnosis was not questioned and remained in tact, bush treatments being seen to provide different, better or supplemental treatments to these diagnoses.

Within the community, individuals who knew bush remedies very well might also have a proficiency in diagnosing the problem. This might be because they recognized the bodily complaints to be symptoms of a particular illness (for example too much heat built up in the body, so cooling treatments such as *wonder of the world leaf* or *mini-root* were given), or they focused on resolving the symptom (for example, reduced urine flow where *catclaw* might be prescribed). In such cases the pharmaceutical effects of the bush being given might be seen to resolve the problem without either the person prescribing the treatment, nor the person themselves being sure of, or focusing on, the specific details of *how* the bush resolved the issue, only that it was effective for this. Treatment and diagnosis might therefore be pragmatic and sometimes necessarily vague, trying things out being ways of diagnosing and treating, without having to place these within a clear explanatory system of *how* something might be effective.

For people such as Hayley, treatments for particular problems came in dreams from God and diagnosis of the problem might also appear in this way. Specialists who worked with spiritual healing, bush healing, but also in biomedicine, might pray to God to help guide their diagnosis and treatment. A Spiritual Baptist healer told me that she used the Bible to divine the diagnosis and treatment for individuals- being guided by God, she would open the Bible on a particular page where from one side of the page she was able to discern the diagnosis and on the other side of the page she was able to discern the treatment for this. Jemima told me that as well as through dreams sent by God, she was able to diagnose someone's affliction by assessing and hearing about symptoms, the touch or feel of a person's body, or through an ability to spiritually 'see'.[4] Jemima told me that she could tell if someone was suffering from a spiritual problem as they 'move different'. An example of this was a girl who Jemima met in a shop who told her she was 'making baby' (pregnant) but something told Jemima that what she had in her belly was not a baby. Jemima left the shop not wanting to get involved in such a potentially spiritually dangerous problem but as the shopkeeper was surprised by Jemima's reaction and knew of her gift, he encouraged the girl to follow and question Jemima. Jemima 'prayed on' the girl and using a spirit key[5] (a prayer), asking God to guide and protect her. Through this prayer she was able to see that the girl had a snake in her belly. Jemima then removed the snake and burned the girls 'panties' (underwear), suspecting this was how the snake had entered the girl as people could hurt each other through their clothes, particular through underwear, people able to put spirits on these.[6] These different examples of

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[4] This can be connected to the Spiritual Baptist practice of 'going down to mourn', where the spirit world becames visible and the person was able to inhabit this, returning with gifts, such as the gift of healing, which they were then able to use in the material world.

[5] This again was a particular Spiritual Baptist understanding, that particular spirit keys were given by God (in dreams and through mourning) to particular people.

[6] As occurs through 'tying' (Chapters 5 and 6)

reaching diagnoses also demonstrate that not only cognitive knowledge but different forms of embodied knowing were drawn on to reach conclusions and produce actions- knowing about the medical could also be experienced through the body.

Such approaches to the body, illness, diagnosis and treatment were not clearly separated systems therefore but rather part of one, wide and bitty system- a *bricolage*[7] of differing approaches, some more appropriate at some times than at others, some to be used in tandem, or others to be used at different times. While as Murray Last suggests in his classic paper (1981) how something works can be less important than the fact that it works, this is also more complex than just finding something that is effective. Local people experimented with different approaches, trying more than one simultaneously or separately. There were also some approaches which might ‘work’, but did so because these actually involved the Devil working on the body to take control over it, for example in the use of some treatments supplied by some spiritual specialists[8]. The effectiveness of a treatment was not necessarily a simple matter therefore but might involve research to be undertaken on the part of, or the behalf of, the afflicted person rather than simply accepting what was offered. While different approaches may have had different material effects on the body, there was also an ultimate cause to sickness- the Devil and devilish spirits (including God allowing the Devil to work on the body as occurred with Job)- which was part of the backdrop to whatever methods were used. These were only able to impact on the illness if God allowed- bush medicine and biomedicine did not only work pharmaceutically, but pharmaceutically-with-God’s-will. Again, what ‘worked’ was not so simple and involved afflicted individuals, their families, friends and churches being active in praying for those with sicknesses to assist in their recovery.

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[7] Following Lévi-Strauss (1989 [1962]), of course.

[8] This included those connected to the Spiritual Baptist church, which more evangelical people locally viewed as the Devil working on the body, only appearing to resolve the sickness.

Approaches and techniques that were used to address illnesses were often pragmatic, and not necessarily fixed in one direction or another. There was the tendency for older people to use bush treatments more frequently than younger members of the community who tended to use more biomedical or pharmaceutical approaches, visiting the pharmacies in Sangre Grande or using local shops to pick up medications for minor ailments such as headaches and rashes. However I was also told that those younger people who lived with their grandparents might also be encouraged to use bush treatments, grandparents knowing off-hand more treatments which could be prepared- certainly younger people told me that they often knew of bush treatments through older relatives. There was also the tendency for people who saw themselves, or were seen locally, as being specialists to use bush medications more frequently, or not to make overly obvious their use of other approaches such as biomedical treatments or the bush recommendations of other specialists. An example of this was in Paula's use of her glasses. Paula usually opted to use bush treatments for ailments, and also used and adapted her own knowledge of the area. Relatively soon after I met Paula, she told me how she collected rainwater from her roof in large plastic bowls which she then poured into blue bottles. She used the cap of the bottle to pour the rainwater into her eyes in the morning and in the evening, which she found was gradually improving her sight, and she needed to use her glasses less. She had heard about this technique from her elder brother who was in his nineties and still did not need to wear glasses. During our conversations throughout my fieldwork, Paula and I often discussed stories in the newspapers and Paula would read out some paragraphs. She was not always able to read these clearly, and it was only far later in my fieldwork that she started to take out her glasses to look at these in more detail in my presence.

Preventative strategies

As mentioned previously, bush medicines were not usually undertaken preventitatively- as Paula suggested, these could 'call' the illness, to cause it come when it otherwise might not. However people tried to prevent cases of illness, or further illness through looking after their health- for example by eating well and undertaking light exercise, actions that were also encouraged within Seventh Day Adventist health services. As I witnessed at the Community Centre, people also avoided sitting on hot concrete or other activities that would disrupt the internal equilibrium of the body. Sometimes people would wear a cloth over their heads to protect them from colds (which were understood to enter the body through the head) and blue bottles might be placed in front of the house to keep away evil spirits (although this happened less frequently than it did in the past). Babies, cars, houses, boats, and other items could also be blessed to keep away spirits and some babies also wore 'blue bags' which stopped them being affected by *mal-jo*. These bags usually contained garlic, silver in the form of a coin or key, a block of *blue* (blue washing powder) and camphor. However the most effective form of protection was to remain close to God and distant from the Devil- being 'covered in the blood' was the most comprehensive form of protection, covering all possible misfortunes and not just cases of illness.

Who heals?

Those consulted for healing were located both within the village and further outside it. While local community members and specialists might give advice about the uses of bush medicine, some people were trusted more than others, often because they were known locally for their previous success in prescribing effective bush medicine or because they were seen as having a 'gift' in this area. These could be for a particular ailment (such as in treating *mal-jo*) and they might be approached solely for this treatment or they might be asked because of their wide range of knowledge in the area. Too many people being aware of someone's skill was also seens as problematic as there could be too many people demanding help for the person to deal with- apart from those employed by the biomedical clinic, healing was not a full-time job for any local specialist. Too many people knowing that someone was proficient in a particular area could also draw criticism and attempts to 'test' their abilities. Furthemore thier life could be made difficult if people did not agree or welcome their diagnosis and treatment, as well as making the person a target for people to send devilish *obeah* spirits on. For example, Joy,[9] a member of the Pentecostal church, told me in private of her ability to divine people's dreams, something she did not wish to be too widely known and even within the church it remained something that was known by few people. She did help interpret people's dreams (as she was given the gift by God to do so), and others passed on her name to people in times of distress and uncertainty. However she did not want to be known for this role more broadly and felt it would attract attention from those with more malicious intent- having to deal with devilish spirits attracted to her by her healing would then reduce her ability to help those she was called to assist.

As indicated above, it was common for people to leave the village to seek treatment for health (and other) problems. This might be because there were people who were known to be particularly effective, for example a Pastor ran a successful church along the East-West Corridor who was known for his ability to heal. One of the people I often saw in the village and whom I chatted with fairly regularly, told me that she and her family had taken her husband to this church to address his ongoing health problems, following a lack of success in resolving aching and swollen joints and limbs through biomedical and bush treatments. The Pastor's attempt to remove the affliction had not yet been successful, and the family was deliberating whether to return (a long and expensive trip) for continuation of this treatment. The trip to this church, and the specifics of her husband's health problems, were not widely known within the village, and they had not sought treatment from local specialists outside the biomedical clinic. As well as the Pastor's reputation for healing being attractive, she felt that there was no one locally who would be able to help them, and she did not want the

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[9] Like other people presented throughout this piece of work, Joy is the name I have given the person involved and is not her actual name.

health problems to be known about, for other people to *maco* and pry into the family business.

These reasons for seeking treatment outside the local area were also given to me when I asked people about this more broadly. Some people also mentioned that individuals who were going to seek help from healing specialists who might be viewed as *obeahmen* or those working with devilish practices, wanted to make sure that others in the village did not hear about this- particularly if the individual was a member of a particular church or had a particular position in the community.[10] The view that there was no one locally who was spiritually powerful enough, suitably proficient or knowledgeable to be able to treat people was repeated to me frequently. Specialist units attached to particular churches (such as monasteries and convents which were part of the Catholic church and could specialize in particular treatments) as well as more specialist biomedical services (such x-rays and scans, obstetric care and maternity wards etc.) were not present in the local area. The village also did not have a priest based in it or nearby, nor were there doctors locally that patients were able to form a longer-term relationship with. As such, there were few people locally who were clearly qualified to heal, and together with local understandings of a lack of those with socio-political and economic power in the village, it was perhaps no surprise also that people from the village left the local area for healing and treatment.

God, the Devil, and the *bricolage*

Through these different examples, the connectedness between different approaches and between the spiritual and the medical is evident. People drew

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[10] This was often talked about in relation to people who had made a trip to somewhere where they 'just happened' to pass the street where a well known *obeahman/woman* was based, and delighted in disclosing to other people in the village that they had seen someone from the village coming out of the building. Sayeed, amongst other people locally, told me that he found such tale-telling comic because 'just happening' to see someone in that area could also imply that the person spreading the gossip had also been visiting the *obeahman*, a fact that he would also relay when re-telling the original story to others.

on different treatments pragmatically, and without necessarily knowing or caring about the specifics of how they worked (Last, 1981). Any treatment only worked if God allowed it to, and the prominent roles of God and the Devil also emerge through the accounts above. The Devil might cause illness but God allowed this, as well as allowing its removal. God had created bush medicine (and other treatments) so that humans had all that they needed to cure afflictions- if they listened to and followed God. Through such cases of illness, treatment and recovery God was constructed as demanding and punishing therefore, as well as slowly revealing His plan. God was also to some extent using the Devil to keep mankind in line. The Devil had his own tricks too however, and could undertake healing- mimicking God to con people into giving away their souls. Discerning whether a treatment was from God or the Devil was therefore also required, and those treatments which perhaps fitted more clearly into approaches corresponding to evangelical Christian understandings of the world were viewed as godly, while others which were less easily fitted in (such as Spiritual Baptist approaches) could be seen as devil-healing. The moral positioning of different approaches might become less important in times when finding *something* that worked became of greater need, and the flexibility of local cosmological assemblages meant that different interpretations as well as different treatments might be drawn on so this was not problematic in practice. Fortunately there were many treatment options for people to try, although these could incur costs that were risks financially and morally (for example through gossip and moral judgment by others), and of course did not necessarily guarantee success. As Brodwin (1996) suggests: '…diseases and healing emerge out of an organizing realm of moral concerns…These moral discourses are fundamentally and explicitly used to organize diagnoses, consultations with healers, narratives of illness, and healing rituals' (1996, p199)- there was a moralizing aspect to health seeking as well as to illnesses themselves.

There was a range of possible approaches to healing therefore, and like cosmological assemblages more broadly, these were intermingled even when sometimes contradicting and different in basis. While biomedical staff were specialized through formalized training and apprenticeship models, bush and herbal healing specialists undertook their own education (including learning from parents and grandparents) led chiefly by God who had provided all the necessary materials and plants for medical use.[11] Materials and understandings of materials provided by God included local plants, pharmaceuticals and other biomedical treatments as well as items and substances such as Epsom salts, silver keys, coins and blue bottles. Understandings of effective approaches and *why* something was effective were broad and able to incorporate new elements and understandings. Like local understandings of how the world worked and ways of knowing about this, these cosmologies were developed, added to and amended by individuals over time as individuals went 'wayfaring' along paths (Ingold, 2010), as they 'made knowledge' (Marchand, 2010a; 2010b).

Treatments and understandings of illnesses were subject to change, contestation and reinterpretation therefore. As is implicit in Hayley, Paula and Jemima's accounts, they were continuing to learn and improve on their skills- all three gaining knowledge and guidance about what to do from their continual communications with God (which allowed them to continue to practice). New elements and understanding could therefore be brought into their practices, and they did not set themselves as against biomedical approaches, although it is perhaps worth noting the differences between Hayley and Jemima on one side versus Paula's work. Paula's methods were more directly tied into scientific approaches to medicine- she was more interested in which pharmacological and physiological changes were brought about through bush treatments, she more directly compared herself and her work to biomedicine and was more directly challenging of biomedical approaches declaring that she did not use medicines herself. This approach was not dissimilar to other people in the village and there was a suspicion of the wider use and promotion of biomedical treatments (and their cost) more broadly. These understandings also fitted in

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[11] This can be compared to understandings of nature held by medieval scholars and later in the rise of modern European scientists who connected God to nature, seeing nature as a book written by that needed to be learned to be read by mankind (Harrison 1998, also cited in Ingold, 2013 who gives a broader discussion of this).

more clearly to general concerns about control and distrust, and to evangelical Christian approaches[12]. Hayley and Jemima were perhaps more similar to the 'old guard' in approach (and both were older than Paula also)- they more explicitly drew on understandings of bush medicine passed on through dreams and gifts in an unquestioning and more complete format, rather than requiring their own investigation and research, as Paula undertook. These understandings were not related to or directly compared to biomedical or scientific understandings, instead they were clearly laid out by God. Hayley and Jemima were also linked to churches that were fading in significance and relevance for people locally and while Anglicanism could be incorporated within an evangelical Christian approach, many people in the village (including Paula herself), struggled to incorporate Spiritual Baptists into the better and godly end of a moral order.

Without entering into the vast discussion of medical pluralism within medical anthropology more broadly,[13] I follow Volker Scheid's argument that the notion of 'medical pluralism' does not fit in every cultural context. In his work on biomedicine and Chinese medicine in China he suggests that 'mangle of practice'[14] is a more suitable term, demonstrating the connectedness of these approaches (Scheid, 2002). In Trinidad also, these approaches were not medically *plural* but were part of a wider assemblage of cosmological understandings and practices that people drew on, often pragmatically, at different times and by different people. Like Langwick's work in Tanzania, use of a treatment did not necessitate having 'faith' in the healer or their therapy and through practices different understandings, but also different diseases and

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[12] Paula herself had been connected to the Evangelical church and certainly took a more evangelical Christian perspective on the world more broadly.

[13] See Charles Leslie's edited special issue in Social Science and Medicine (1980) for classic perspectives on this issue and a special issue in Anthropology and Medicine for more recent conceptualizations (Parkin, Krause and Alex, 2013). The conclusion of Langwick's 2011 book also gives an excellent overview of medical pluralism in post-colonial settings and summaries of key arguments can also be found in Lock and Ngugen, 2010.

[14] A term attributed to Andrew Pickering, 1995.

cures, were created (Langwick, 2011). For Langwick, different approaches 'not only coexist but also exist *inside one another*' (2011, p.17, emphasis in original)- a focus on therapeutic practice contests descriptions of medical pluralism as the concept of pluralism requires that at least one system is held as steady for comparison. However, drawing from approaches within Science and Technology Studies, Langwick views all approaches as constructed and constructing of their objects, situated in a particular space and time (Langwick, 2011), there is not one steady and complete 'system' that can be compared with another, but a jumbled assemblage, and 'mangle of practices'. Again following these conceptualizations comes the notion that understandings are always in the process of becoming and are formed through practices[15], be these biomedical, bush or more spiritual healing approaches (although of course it is difficult in practice to separate these, further illustrating their connectedness and the difficulty of applying the term 'medical pluralism').

While I do not frame these different approaches here as 'medical pluralism' I am certainly not the only anthropologist in this field to note that both biomedicine and bush medicine are drawn on in Trinidad and the Caribbean, nor that bush medicine can also be connected to understandings of the spiritual (e.g. Brodwin, 1996; Littlewood, 1998; Mischel, 1959; Payne-Jackson & Alleyne, 2004; Simpson, 1962). How these relate to wider cosmological understandings, including wider conceptions of misfortune, and to social and historical circumstances have been less examined however, particularly in the light of more recent evangelical Christian approaches in the Caribbean which were not present when these authors were undertaking fieldwork. Healing, but also cases of illness themselves, are thus illustrative of broader cultural relationships and connections, morality and moral order as well as the understanding of cosmologies as situated assemblages, composed of different elements that are drawn on, developed, worked on and refined over time. Healing was crafted by individuals in the village. However I move now to widening this focus on

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[15] E.g. as discussed by Ingold (2010) and Marchand (2010a; 2010b) amongst others (Chapter 4).

individual bodies and sicknesses to contextualize these in understandings of misfortune (and success) more generally, both at a village level and beyond to situate these within a wider moral order and the crafting of a cosmology-as-lived.

8. The Devil in the village and in the State

Georgina was a close neighbour to the family I stayed with during my fieldwork- although this was a closeness in terms of vicinity, certainly not in terms of friendliness or support. She had ongoing disputes with her neighbours and others in the village and was not known as a kind person, instead said to pick fights with others in the community. I was witness to one such fight when Georgina found a piece of building material- a plank of wood- on the track in her garden. She was sure that it had been left there on purpose by one of her neighbours and she wanted it removed. She called the local police to report her neighbours for placing the wood in her garden, however the policeman who attended was a good friend of one of the accused neighbours so arrived, chatted to his friends and then left. Georgina's son then moved the plank away from the garden and the confrontation ended, although conversation reflecting on this encounter continued for some time afterwards.

Georgina was in her eighties, and her son lived next door to her in a small wooden building he had constructed himself which had no running water or electricity. An electric light connected to the circuit of his mother's brick house hung outside his house and he washed himself and his clothing from a standpipe outside. He lived alone and his house was not constructed well and was in a state of falling down. He was also known locally by an offensive nickname which suggested that he copulated with animals, preferring their company to, or perhaps unable to acquire, a girlfriend. Both Georgina and her son were not highly regarded in the village, due to Georgina's son's lifestyle and Georgina's character. Georgina was also understood locally to practice *obeah* but was not high up and powerful in this art. Georgina's husband had been a fisherman before he died, and was well-known for using *obeah*, and therefore it was presumed likely that Georgina did also.

Fishing was one of the longest-standing local industries and often members of the same family, such as fathers and sons, would all become fishermen. Usually two men were in a boat, a lead and a second less experienced fisherman, and the boats themselves were often owned by better off people locally or further afield, who retained a financial cut of the fish caught. Fishing could be dangerous with a number of fishermen drowning each year in the strong currents along this part of the coast. Fishermen in general were understood as maintaining particular rituals to aid in their success and to keep themselves safe, including using *obeah* to help catch fish. It was understood that particular fish were 'for' particular people to catch, that there was a relationship between fishermen and the fish they caught. There were seen to be only so many fish in the sea and if one fisherman caught more than his fair share there would be less left for others. Fishermen would therefore also 'tie' each others' boats using *obeah* to stop each other catching more fish than they should, as well as using *obeah* 'prayers' to make their own fishing more successful. Tales of Georgina's husband's success in catching fish were well known, as was his use of *obeah* to do so. This use of *obeah* was reinforced by another well-known story which caused Georgina's husband to stop fishing all together. It was said that one day while out fishing, a fish jumped into his boat (or in an alternative version of the story, another fishing boat) and spoke to the fishermen there. The fish said that Georgina's husband was no longer welcome in the sea- the implication being that he had used *obeah* too much and too successfully and gathered far more than his fair share of fish. From that day on, Georgina's husband never went back to the sea, understanding as others did locally, that if he did the sea would take him and he would drown.

Obeah, devil pacts and the Illuminati

I was told that like other people who used *obeah*, Georgina had placed objects in particular positions- such as plants outside her house- in order to protect her home and property, something that could also be observed in the houses of other people locally who used *obeah*. Other indications that people were using *obeah* included sudden or unpredictable success- for example in business or in a court case- and *obeah* was also used to stop competitors from doing well. Accusations of the use of *obeah* occurred on local, national and international levels, although it was usually understood that more powerful *obeah* was used nationally and internationally than in the village- and of course there was no one who could deal with really powerful *obeah* spirits locally.

Obeah use, nationally and internationally, was more explicitly linked to devilish practice than local *obeah* use, although it was understood as connected. It was often assumed that to become successful individuals had made a pact with the Devil, so to some extent success was indicative of being in league with him. Hinduism was seen as a form of devil-worship for many people locally, so it was no surprise that there were successful 'Indian' (Indo-Trinidadian and Hindu) businessmen, nor that the majority 'Indian' government had got in during the last elections and was now passing laws and implementing policies that were seen as being for their own and the Devil's benefit. Local *obeah* use was viewed more as dabbling with lower-level devilish spirits, rather than the stronger and more powerful spirits who individuals with real socio-political power worked with, these spirits being higher up in Satan's hierarchy. Any local relationships with spirits were therefore with less powerful ones, although Georgina's husband no doubt had formed a relationship with an evil spirit stronger than the other fishermen. A more powerful evil spirit required greater sacrifices to maintain the relationship with the individual however. I was told of one businessman who was rumoured to have gained access to and been able to build on a lot of land. In return however his son was severely injured in a car crash and was paralysed- the implication being that the businessman had sacrificed the health of his son to the devilish spirits he worked with in order to gain this land. I was also told on a number of separate occasions about successful businessmen where at least one of the construction workers on their property developments was killed each year, sacrificed to the devilish spirits they were working with in order to gain their success.

While there were examples given of devil pacts being made within Trinidad to ensure success, relationships with the devil on a wider scale, through the Illuminati,[1] were also talked about. ‘The Wicked Music Industry’, an internet video available to buy as a DVD in shops in Sangre Grande (and also available on You Tube) detailed the relationship between the Illuminati and particular successful black American musicians. This focused particularly on the rappers Kanye West and Jay-Z and how they had involved Beyoncé, Jay-Z’s now wife and successful musician in her own right, in the Illuminati also. The internet programme detailed how Illuminati signs were visible in the music videos of these musicians, in the same way as Georgina’s arrangement of plants in front of her house revealed to those in the know that she was practicing *obeah*. Evidence of this use included the hand gestures and symbols shown in these videos, Jay-Z’s signature triangle that he made over his eye as one of these. I was taken through one of Kanye West’s music videos and one of Beyoncé’s, section by section, and shown how the videos illustrated their involvement with the Illuminati and the Devil, Beyoncé’s music video also showing how Jay-Z had also pulled her into this world. As these artists were so successful they were understood to have built relationships with particularly strong spirits, but the Illuminati were understood to be at work in Port of Spain also. I was told about- and then found for myself- a particular house in Port of Spain which had a Masonic symbol on it. This, I was told, was one of the Illuminati headquarters. This particular ‘lodge’, had taken in a boy needing a home who had later died in strange circumstances (he was said to have jumped off a roof he would not have been able to reach on his own). The death of this boy was seen as a sacrifice to the Devil to ensure the ongoing success of people locally attached to the Illuminati lodge.

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[1] A secret organization made up of powerful and elite figures said to secretly control how the world is run. The original Illuminati group was a secret society founded in Baveria in the 18th century which sought to limit church interference into everyday life. More recently, the Illuminati have been popularized through conspiracy theorist websites on the internet and have also been popularized through Dan Brown’s book ‘Angels and Demons’(2001). People locally had heard of this group through the internet and wider conversations, and not only linked the group to conspiracies and freemasonry but also explicitly to Devil-worship.

The link between members-only lodges, secret societies and nefarious spiritual practices was one that went beyond the Illuminati and fed into the past of the village. Like other areas of Trinidad, and as mentioned earlier, the village previously had a number of lodges which local people were attached to. These lodges required membership payments and would look after members throughout their life, providing support and covering funeral costs. While some of these were friendly societies, others were branches of orders such as the Freemasons, the Order of the Rose and the Foresters. In these lodges, spiritual practices were undertaken to build a relationship with spirits which would aid the success of members. As well as being shown the remains of buildings in the area which had previously served as lodges, I heard many stories from older people in the village of times in their childhood where they had heard or seen some of these practices being undertaken. This included people who had looked through the windows of the lodges to see people dressed in black clothing or particular instruments linked to rituals that were visible, as well as childhood tales of enounters with the magical books of older relatives who were known to be part of such lodges.[2] Herskovits and Herskovits' ethnography on the local area (1947) also gives details of these lodges, positioning them as a counterbalance to churches where they suggested that local people had a degree of self-determination. They describe lodges as an outlet for political activity which was otherwise denied to local people as part of a colonial system:

> From both the economic and social points of view, lodges are mutual self-help institutions of significance, for lodge-brotherhood entails more than going to meetings and paying dues. If a member is ill, his fellows visit him; if he comes on hard times, they aid him; in disputes they try to arbitrate; and where affiliation with one of the more important groups is involved, the lodge is a principal source of prestige (Herskovits and Herskovits, 1947, p.257)

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[2] This included 'bad books' such as the De Laurence book, 'The Sixth and Seventh Book of Moses'. Chicago based De Laurence publishers published books on magic and the occult that were used for practicing *obeah*. The Sixth and Seventh Book of Moses proports to be the lost books of Moses not included in the Bible.

Herskovits and Herskovits recognized a difference in the lodges between non-secret mutual aid groups and secret societies, and while there was also this distinction in the village during my stay, it was the secret lodge societies that were usually being referred to by the term 'lodges', the non-secret mutual aid groups being of less interest. From Herskovits and Herskovits' work it is worth noting that these societies were linked to status, prestige, and secret ritual, especially following death (Herskovits and Herskovits, 1940, p257-264) and therefore were not so different to groups such as the Illuminati.

Particular lodges had more powerful and successful memberships than others, and again related to the power of the spirits that members worked with. Lodges seen to have the highest spiritual and socio-economic power included the Rosicrucianists,[3] a branch of which Eric Williams (Trinidad's first Prime Minister) was said to belong to. I was told that there were strange circumstances around the death of Eric Williams which were due to his involvement in the lodge (for example that no one was ever allowed to see his body). I also heard a story about the death of a member from a Rosicrucianist lodge in a nearby village, where after death the lodge members took and prepared the body for burial and family members were no longer able to see the body. This was because lodge members undertook particular death rituals, including cutting out the tongue of dead members so lodge secrets were not revealed after death. The importance of keeping lodge secrets was fundamental in life also and lodges required a password in order for people to enter them. Lodge members wore rings embedded with the lodge symbol to reveal their involvement to other members. While local lodges had now long since closed, I met one person who showed me the lodge ring he had kept and he told me of some of the practices he still carried out that were connected to the lodge- for example saying particular prayers and burying items to protect his crops and ensure they grew well. He

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[3] Rosicrucianists (followers of Rosicrucianism), are part of a secret philosophical society thought to be formed in late Medieval Germany based on the idea that there are ancient truths, hidden from the common man, which give insight to nature, and the physical and spiritual world. The group is symbolized by the 'rosey (rose) cross', a symbol which also features in Freemasonry rituals.

was one of very few lodge members still in the village, even if he now had no lodge to attend. Like the socio-economic success the village had had, these lodges had gone with the closure of the estates, as had the spiritual and socio-political power in the village.

Secret societies and powerful individuals whose position and success were related to spiritual power gained by entering relationships with devilish spirits were seen as taking place across Trinidad. The contemporary problems Trinidad was encountering, and those found on a more global scale, were also seen as connected to this- the Devil's work and power becoming more obvious, powerful and more frequent due to the coming End of Days. In particular it was understood that individuals who were possessed or tempted by evil spirits caused the crime problems in Trinidad, including the perceived corruption of politicians and the justice system. While all of these people were viewed as unchristian, some (for example Hindus and Muslims) were also viewed as devil-worshippers. Rather than merely failing to follow God and laying themselves open to devilish intervention, these people had actively made pacts with, and worshipped, the Devil. In return the devilish spirit had given them wealth and socio-political power, keeping them in position able to get away with acting illegally and being kept out of prison. However such good fortune came with a cost, requiring personal or human sacrifice. For Christians however, through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ further sacrifices were not necessary, God only requiring that they live a healthy Christian lifestyle and maintain a relationship with the Holy Spirit.

Money and morality

Success and excessive good fortune could therefore be indicative of Devil-worship or of practicing *obeah*. Gaining material wealth demonstrated this success and furthermore the notes and coins of money itself were also common places in which devilish spirits could dwell. Evil spirits could be placed on money using *obeah*, so that whomever touched it might have the spirit transferred to them. Therefore as discussed earlier, taking money from a spiritually powerful person might potentially be dangerous. Money was a carrier of evil, not just metaphorically but also literally.[4] Money was also seen as incompatible with ‘gifts of the spirit’- gifts given by God to some of His followers such as the knowledge of plants to heal (as was the case for Hayley and Jemima), the ability to read dreams (as was the case for Joy) or to see visions of the future (also a gift of Hayley’s). Should anyone charge for the use of their gifts, it was understood that they would lose them- these were provided by God with the idea that they would be used without money changing hands. This was also a way, I was told, in which it was possible to distinguish between someone providing a service that was based on *obeah* rather than gifts of the spirit- the person using *obeah* would ask for money for this. In reality, such lines were often blurred with individuals expected to bring a present or ‘gift’ to the person they were consulting, or being asked to give a ‘donation’ or pay for a drink that they had while they were waiting. This blurring of the gift/payment lines meant that such exchanges were open to interpretation, including in churches. Most churches took collection, and in some, such as the Pentecostal and Seventh Day Adventist churches that had long services, there could be more than one collection during the service. Some larger Full Gospel churches or roadshows could ask for higher amounts of money or continuously asked for money throughout the event. This led some people to suggest that these churches, and particularly the larger churches and roadshows from outside the local area, were taking so much money that they could not be doing God’s work. Pastors who had large houses and benefitted financially from their involvement in the church were also mentioned as evidence that a particular church was not God’s ‘true’ church (and with the implication that there might be some devilish involvement).

On a local level, some of those who were most well-off were those who were involved in the drug trade- in *fass money* (Chapter 2). Suddenly having money,

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[4] In the case of the American dollar bill, the illustration of the pyramid and all-seeing eye was connected to the Illuminati, further reinforcing the notion that the USA economy, and wealth and success in the States, was based on devilish collaborations.

which was often spent on buying clothing for wives and girlfriends, on a car or on expensive drinks at local bars (such as whisky- a status drink and usually beyond the financial reach of local people), was suspicious and likely to mean that this person was involved in the drug trade somehow. These were usually younger men who farmed marijuana in the bush, or who carried this, cocaine, and other drugs, from South America out to sea and on to fishing boats for exchange. The young men involved with this trade, and those in the village who received the state pension, tended to be those who were the best off financially in the local area. Involvement in the drug trade was not condoned locally, and such wealth was disapproved of. However it was noted that this wealth did get shared the friends and family members of the local drug lord, many other people in the village he lived in (further up the coast) benefitting from this and from the money that his team put into the local economy. The fact that drug trade money and benefits were being shared with others, and the recognition that there were few other opportunities for employment in the local area meant that this was not viewed with the same degree of disgust that successful businessmen and politicians attracted, and perhaps why this was not specifically connected to the involvement of the Devil.

If success, fortune and power illustrated closeness to the Devil and immorality, then poverty, less success and power illustrated closeness to God and morality. This was something that was interpreted on a local level as being important- local lack of power and success showed what a moral community the village was, and how close they were to God. While it was acknowledged that God looked after his followers, people would talk about having just enough to survive, and that on darker days God would provide. For example, some of the small businesses run by the family I lived with were not going well that year for various reasons, including a world-wide recession (they sold some goods to a Trinidadian base of an international company). By my staying with them and paying a modest amount of board-and-rent, they were able to survive and I was told that this was God’s plan so that I could provide money at this otherwise more difficult time. This was somewhat reinforced by the fact that parts of their business began picking up again in the months before I was due to leave. In general in the village, wealth was seen not for accumulation but for allowing everyday living, so that being able to continue to bring in money was better than earning a lot in the short term. The most extreme form of this in the village was said to be the fishermen who, would pay the boat-owner their dues, and household monies to wives or girlfriends, and then spend the rest of whatever they earned in the day on drink that night. A fruitful day's fishing would involve drinking lots of beers while a less successful one might mean only one or two beers each. Those who had done particularly well were expected to buy a drink for others, and they could expect that they would have some bought for them in return on another occasion.

Church sermons also focused on the connection between poverty, spiritual wellbeing and morality, with Bible stories and talk of Jesus' humble upbringing as illustrative of this. While churchgoers were encouraged not to focus on material wealth and goods in this life, descriptions of heaven could contain these- in one sermon we were told that we would have seven cars each in heaven, as well as all the most delicious food and wonderful clothing we might want. There was a sense then that wanting such things, and having such things, was not in itself bad, but that these must come from God and would mostly likely come in heaven rather than in this life. There was a notion that having less now could mean having more wealth later, after death. God would provide for His followers in the next life, if not in this. Again this was illustrated in the story of Job- after enduring such suffering Job then went on to have more wealth than he had started with. Again there was perhaps particular relevance of such understandings for an area which had flourished during the time when the estates were productive, but which following independence and successive changes to Trinidad and global markets, was now perceived to be not doing as well, being abandoned by the state and with little power and resources. This lack of resources in comparison to other areas of Trindad also provided- or reinforced an already present- 'us' and 'them' divide; 'they' have money, power and little morality, 'we' have little money and power but are more moral. Crime and social problems were seen as more prevalent elsewhere and people in the village (including myself), certainly felt safer in the village than in most other areas of the country. By viewing themselves as different and superior in terms of morality, those in the local area continued to highlight the differences between the village and other parts of Trinidad. One of the great differences was in relation to Carnival, the biggest event in the calendar for many Trindadians, Trinidad's biggest tourist draw and an event of which the nation had traditionally been proud, and which somewhat defined it.

Carnival[5] occurred in the run up to the start of Lent, taking place over several days from Saturday to Tuesday and finishing on Ash Wednesday. The *mas*[6] bands that formed groups to dance, or 'chip' to *soca* music along the Trinidadian streets over these days were in earlier years (including in the *ol'time*), based around traditional Carnival characters such as 'sailors' or North American 'Red Indian' costumes (Crowley, 1956; Hill, 1985, also a central feature in Earl Lovelace's classic Trinidadian novel 'The Dragon Can't Dance', 1981). In more recent years Carnival *mas* bands have dressed in a more similar way to the outfits associated with the Rio Carnival, with *mas* players wearing small diamante encrusted and feather-laden bikinis and shorts. These outfits were extremely expensive in relation to the local cost of living, being priced at around $3000 TTD (approximately £300), plus the cost of joining a *mas* band. Participation in Carnival therefore required a great deal of financial output, with people taking out loans in order to pay for this which they then paid back over the year only to take out another loan before the next Carnival. Wearing costumes that displayed the bodily figure so prominently could also mean some people attended Carnival fitness training sessions and there were many smaller 'fetes' that people attended in the in the months leading up to Carnival, both of which again added to the cost of the event. The largest carnival event was in

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[5] For more detailed anthropological analysis of Trinidad Carnival see: Crowley, 1956; Hill, 1972, 1985; Miller, 1991, 1994; Stewart, 1986.

[6] From 'masquerade'.

Port of Spain but smaller versions were held in other cities, towns and villages across Trinidad.

For those in the village Carnival -with its revealing outfits and associations with excessive drinking and casual sexual activity- was seen as unchristian, and non-participation was virtually a badge of honour among the local evangelical Christian churches. Many churches ran events that competed with Carnival, such as nature retreats held in the local area where families would camp and eat together with other Christian families from their church. These events were also somewhat the reverse of Carnival celebrations- family-based, restrained, based on being in the natural environment, worshipping God, and eating together, rather than dancing through city streets drinking alcohol. Churches from other areas of Trinidad also arranged trips to the local area to enjoy the natural bush and beaches over this time instead of participating in Carnival. This further reinforced the notion that the area offered a more Christian alternative to Carnival participation. These competing events were about promoting and reinforcing morality and Christian lifestyles, which appeared even more distinct when compared with the conspicuous consumption and spending that accompanied Carnival. While Carnival was disapproved of, it was also an event which local people would have found hard to participate in should they have wanted to. The financial outlay required would have meant they could have only participated in a limited way, if at all, while involvement in an alternative event meant they did not have to compete with the grander Carnival that occurred in Port of Spain. Such non-participation and involvement in the nature camps increased visible differences between people locally and those in other parts of Trinidad, rather than trying to compete. Again their good Christian behaviour and lack of financial outlay illustrated local people's morality and closeness to God, and their distance from the behaviour that took place in other parts of Trinidadian society.

The disordered State

The devilish practices and Devil-led behaviour of increasing numbers of individuals in Trinidad was a cause of great concern in the local churches, and many collective praying sessions and sermons referred to this. Prayer was seen as a key means through which this could be restrained as far as possible but the situation was somehow inevitable given the coming closeness of the End of Days. Other events such as world-wide recession and the Japanese tsunami could be seen as further evidence of the Devil's work.[7] Some events were given explicit biblical interpretation, such as the growth of the European Union being foretold in the Bible as the Twelve Tribes of Israel gathering before the End of Days. A fundamental message that came from the churches and more broadly within the community was that given the inevitability of the situation, individuals should focus on themselves and their own spirituality, rather than attempting to make changes at the government, national or international level. Such attempts at larger change were futile and energy was better expended on personal development. There were few calls to fight for change therefore, and much talk of personal spiritual growth.

As well as Trinidad (and the wider world) being seen to be corrupted by devilish forces throughout society, the material nature of the world was also being changed by devilish intervention. Pollution, climate change and natural disasters were examples of these changes, and climate change in particular was felt at a local level as the distinction between the dry season and the rainy season was now less clear and affected crop growth and practices. There were also problems with the sea wall around the coast collapsing, leading to the coastal road falling into the sea in some places. The roads to this area of the coast anyway were not well maintained, and buses no longer ran to reach the

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[7] National and international leaders were also referred to as being in league with the Devil- the current British Prime Minister, David Cameron, and President of the United States, Barak Obama, being examples of this.

most distant villages since a bus had got stuck on the deteriorating road. Medical and teaching staff also refused to travel to these further out villages as the coastal road was too dangerous. Individuals from the affected villages formed protests, which blocked local roads for some hours, were rarely reported on in the press and did not tend to move beyond the local area. This was further evidence of the national government ignoring local concerns, as well as a general neglect of the local area (and why it was better to focus on a relationship with God instead of government protests). The road and sea wall, as well as the ever-growing bush in which the estates were based, had been maintained during colonialism when produce from the estates in the area was transferred by road and by boat. Again the abandonment of this maintenance since Independence, and the closure of the estates, were blamed on the Trinidadian government as failing to maintain the state. Like the individual body which needed maintenance to protect it from devilish intervention and keep it close to God, the Trinidadian state was also understood to need maintenance to prevent the devil working within it and keep it close to God. The Trinidadian government was therefore seen to have failed in maintaining the State, opening it up to devilish interference and allowing the successful election of a devil-worshipping parliament who would continue to do the Devil's work in an increasingly powerful way. The Devil was interacting with the State from within, stopping the justice system, the police, even the very material nature of the bush, roads and sea wall from functioning as a healthy nation.

Like individual bodies therefore, the State needed to be maintained to be kept healthy and functioning, and like the relationship with the Holy Spirit in individual bodies, Trinidad's connection to God should be constantly maintained and renewed through the moral actions of its citizens (particularly its leaders) and through their prayers. The similarities between perceptions of individual bodies and the State extend beyond merely the notion of maintenance however. While being independent as a State, Trinidad and Tobago was also connected more broadly to other Caribbean nations and to world trade and supra-national systems. Like the body that was individual but also connected to the family, the local area, the church etc, the State was also individual but embedded in wider connections- separate but linked.

The internal content versus the boundaries of individual bodies and the State were also similar- the internal contents of the body and State were paid attention to but there was less emphasis on bodily and State boundaries. The borders of the body and State were, and always had been, penetrable by outside forces. There could be little done about these overwhelming external influences but the internal could be maintained. Such understandings can be linked to Trinidad's past in always having been linked to the wider world system through slavery, colonialism and other influential international organizations who have been based on the island (such as the US airbase during World War II) or contributing to its fortunes (such as world-wide oil and natural mineral markets). Trinidad has always had to look outside and been impacted by outside forces who enter and leave its boundaries, just like the individual bodies within the State.[8] There was little that could be done about boundary maintainance therefore- these were outside of an individual's or the State's control while more of a focus could be placed on internal maintainence over which there was greater control.

The Devil and modernity

The notion once put forward that through modernity and the process of Enlightenment, science has demystified magic and religion, secularism and a scientific outlook leading to the 'disenchantment of the world' (Weber, 1992 [1930]) has been dismantled both by ethnographies that have demonstrated that this trajectory has not occurred, and historical assessments that suggest

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[8] It is possible to read colonialism as a spirit that previously inhabited the body of the State, being cast off through Independence. While this place of this spirit was initially filled by the Holy Spirit, or appeared that it would be, instead devilish spirits took up residence and will remain within, causing disorder, while many Trinidadians continued to follow the Devil and engaged in devilish practices.

that this ‘disenchantment’ never took occurred in the first place (Dalston and Park, 1998; Saler, 2006).

A number of ethnographies suggest that magic and religion have not declined in relation to modernity. Meyer (1999), Austin-Broos (1997) and Comaroff and Comaroff (2000) amongst many others have noted the growth of Pentecostalism and other evangelical and Charismatic Christian movements in post-colonial contexts, while Geshiere (2000), Comaroff and Comaroff (1999) and Taussig (2010[1980]) have looked at the growth of witchcraft, occult economies and devil contracts in similar settings. These would suggest that the appeal, experience of and recourse to religion and other ‘enchantments’ have not disappeared, many of these authors instead suggesting that this growth is a direct *response to* modernity. This is the line that I follow here- as well as previously suggesting that for those in the village ‘science’ and a scientific outlook could be not separated from religious and other cosmological understandings anyway, I suggest that the way in which the Devil was seen to operate was linked with the position of the village and ways in which some people were seen to benefit more than others from contemporary current social, economic and political circumstances. The Devil in the village and the State was the Devil acting in and through modernity.

In the village, accusations of those involved in *obeah*, devil-worship or devil-pacts were linked to success, particularly on a national or international level, but also inherently to immorality. Georgina, her son and her husband were not viewed positively locally, they did not follow social conventions or norms of nicety- living well with others, looking after oneself or undertaking fishing in a reasonable and respectful way. That they worked with *obeah* was not surprising, their unchristian behaviour portraying their general lack of morality, further enforced by the idea that they would also practice *obeah*. National and international figures who were powerful were also accused of immorality, as were other individuals and groups within Trinidad who were seen to be particularly successful. Such accusations raised questions as to who was actually in power as accusations stretched beyond Trinidad and the Caribbean. Power exerted on individuals locally was a form of masked and unclear power, its origin unclear only in that it did not come from the local area. There was a general distrust of this power, and perhaps demonstrated ways in which the promises of Independence of Trinidad ruling itself, had not come to fruition. Those in the village therefore provided a stark comparison to this- while others were wealthy and immoral, people locally were not wealthy but were moral. Local people did not have power and wealth, those products of devil-working, but could at least claim to be morally superior. Such accusations brought these others down- what good was such wealth when one would never be part of heaven? Better to have moral superiority and be on God's side.

Geshiere (2000) notes that witchcraft practices and accusations provided a leveling function, but were also linked to the accumulation of wealth. It is this aspect that Comaroff and Comaroff (1999) focus on in their term 'occult economies'- '…the development, real or a imagined, of magical means for material ends'. They note a spread of a wide range of related phenomena in their South African fieldsites which they place under this heading, including ritual murder, the sale of body parts, and financial scams. Comaroff and Comaroff link occult economies to attempts to make sense of modernity and the encounter of rural South Africa with supra-national discourses and practices of neoliberalism. Comparing this to the work of Max Gluckman on Mau Mau ritual practices (1963b) which he situates within other ethnographic examples (such as Richards' 1935 work on witchcraft in Central Africa and Worsley's 1957 work on cargo cults in Melanesia), they conclude that people turn to the occult in times of rapid social and economic change, times of 'possibility and powerlessness, of desire and despair, of mass joblessness and hunger amidst the accumulation, by some, of great amounts of new wealth' (Comaroff and Comaroff, 1999, p.283). Within these contexts of unequal wealth distribution, such occult economies were viewed as illicit means by which some people accumulated wealth. In Trinidad also, wealth accumulation did not occur evenly across the State and places such as the northeast coast did not benefit. This was perhaps not what local people expected following Independence. For people locally there were clearly other people who *had* managed to amass wealth and relatively stable positions of power following Independence and within the wider world system. As money was linked to immorality and evil, the Devil's assistance in acquiring such accumulation was not unlikely.

Also key to the arguments of Comaroff and Comaroff, and indeed to Gluckman, is that these occult economies were not about a return to old methods or 'traditional' solutions but were new understandings, new ways of dealing with contemporary circumstances. Both Comaroff and Comaroff (1999) and Gluckman (1963b) quote Evans Pritchard in saying 'New situations demand new magic' (Evans-Pritchard, 1976 [1937], p513). 'New' these may be, but as Taussig illustrates, these emerge from particular existing and historic cultural understandings (2010). Taussig's book, The Devil and Commodity Fetishism in South America (2010), links devil pacts or devil contracts to the system of capitalism. Taussig identified that it was a particular trait of a peasants' worldview in Latin America that the idea of the Devil was invoked when confronted with a capitalist system. Their response to such as system was the personification of capitalism in the figure of a Devil, an image that emerged from their colonial experiences. He suggests that through capitalism, as the mode of production of objects and wealth is hidden, they might appear to have come from magic and therefore the idea that wealth was accumulated in this way, through unnatural means, was not an unreasonable idea for the peasant populations on which he focused (2010). For these peasants, market exchange was seen as unnatural and therefore evil- again wealth that appeared to come to individuals through unnatural and evil means.

I suggest that that there was an affinity for a similar peasant worldview in the village that can be compared to, and differed from, a more capitalist (and neo-liberal capitalist) approach. Given the history of Trinidad and its involvement in slavery and colonialism, clearly capitalism was not something new to the Caribbean. However village life has tended to follow more along the lines of what Mintz has termed 'reconstituted peasantry' (1974; 1979; 1986) in relation to people's livelihood and worldview in the area. Mintz applies this concept to Caribbean forms of peasantry as people did not start out as peasants- being plantation labourers or runaways- but became peasants both as a *response* and as a *form of resistance* to wider capitalist forces. Such peasantries were created through modernity and a developing world economy and as a response to it, rather than livelihoods being situated between pre-capitalist and capitalist economies (Mintz, 1979). This understanding of local ways of living can be seen also in the work of Herskovits and Herskovits (1947) and Littlewood (1992). While elements of both understandings that tied to a peasant worldview and a more capitalist worldview were evident in the village, through changing wider cultural circumstances I suggest there were increasing experiences of the impact of neoliberal capitalism. How people responded to this drew on both perspectives of the world, but increasingly cosmological ideas were being influenced by, and confronted with, neoliberal understandings of the world.

I use the term 'neoliberal' here to refer to a particular type of capitalism which following David Harvey (2005) I see as an economic theory and philosophy of practices, an all-encompassing hegemonic project with a geographic spread which through discourse and policies aim bring all human action into the domain of the market.[9] This is similar to Comaroff and Comaroff's term 'millennial capitalism'- 'a capitalism that presents itself as a gospel of salvation; a capitalism that, if rightly harnessed, is invested with the capacity wholly to transform the universe of the marginalized and disempowered' (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2000, p.292). However I also follow Hoffman, DeHart and Collier's (2006) critique of Harvey's conceptualization of neoliberalism as a coherent and a stable package of elements to acknowledge its fluidity and the diverse ways this comes together in different contexts. Hoffman, DeHart and Collier (2006) argue that a flexible understanding of neoliberalism is needed and that

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[9] An in-depth examination of neoliberal policies in relation to Trinidad is beyond the scope of this work and has been previously been undertaken by other authors. For example see Klak's, 1998 edited book 'Globalization and Neoliberalism: The Caribbean Context' for specific examples relating to Trinidad and Tobago as well as the Caribbean in general and Pino's 2009 paper for a more detailed summary and context of policies that relate specifically to Trinidad and Tobago.

neoliberal elements can be found in different configurations in different cultures. Other authors, such as Gledhill (2007) and Kingfisher and Maskovsky (2008), also note that neoliberalism is a process, often difficult to define and indeed to establish where it starts and ends. As Gershon (2011) suggests, through neoliberalism market rationality is an *achieved* state, people are not economically rational of their own accord but market rationality as a perspective and in practice can be created through the State through various policies. This brings me to perhaps the key aspect in relation to my wider argument here- both Harvey (2005) and Gershon (2011) suggest that for neoliberal policies to be implemented people had to begin to engage with, and possibly enact, neoliberal concepts of agency (Gershon, 2011, p.538). Rather than taking place in the background, neoliberal capitalism required an active shaping and participation in its cosmology. While Taussig (2010) makes a distinction between peasant and capitalist worldviews therefore, in the contemporary period and in relation to Trinidad, this was not only a peasant:capitalist split but a peasant:neoliberal capitalism split, the *ol'time* versus the contemporary time. Leaving aside for the moment the issues of how much worldviews can ever be completely separated and apparently cohesive, there was a difference in outlook and agency between these different perspectives. It is these differences, and the increasing impact of a particularly neoliberal worldview in the village, which I aim to draw on and which I see as being illustrated through Taussig's conceptual division.

Drawing on the differences between peasant and capitalist modes of production, Taussig makes the following comparison between the two, suggesting how the worldviews may differ:

> The peasant mode of production differs from the capitalist mode in fundamental ways. Under capitalism the proletariat work force lacks the control over the means of production that peasants exercise. The peasant uses cash not capital, and sells in order to buy, whereas the capitalist uses cash as capital to buy in order to

> sell at a profit, thus adding to capital and repeating the circuit on an ever increasing scale lest the enterprise die. The peasant producer lives in a system that is aimed at the satisfaction of an array of qualitatively defined needs, contrarily, the capitalist and the capitalist system have the aim of limitless capital accumulation (Taussig, 2010 p25).

Foster (1965) links peasant worldview to a concept of limited good- that there is only so much good in the world and the more that one person accumulates, the less that is left for others. In the context of the Caribbean, this fits also to the understanding of 'crab antics' discussed by Wilson as part of Caribbean societies. Crab antics is named from the observation that one crab in a barrel will climb out (so a lid must be placed on the barrel), while more than one crab will pull each other down as they try to escape so that all remain stuck in the barrel (and no lid to the barrel is needed). Wilson applies the same idea to Caribbean societies, that someone doing better than others will be pulled down- again that there was limited good and someone doing better than others will mean that other people will not do as well. In the village, this could be seen in the understandings of fishing and in *obeah* use more generally, but even in hunting (where a hunter should not take more meat than he needed), in gardening (where someone should not have a crop that did significantly better than others) or in business (where someone should not hold on to and accumulate their wealth or do significantly better than their competitors). To do so brought assumptions of using spiritual power to gain personal benefits and wealth at the cost of others.

As illustrated above, a link was made in the village between the accumulation of wealth, and even money itself, and *obeah* and devilish practice. These were seen as opposite to the ways in which God worked and can be compared to Weber's reading of the development of capitalism through Calvinism (Weber, 1992). Through a capitalist (and particularly a neo-liberal capitalist) worldview, there was not limited good but unlimited good, in fact there was exponential growth. More and more wealth could be acquired without others losing out. However it was down to the individual to acquire this themselves, and to prepare themselves for the market. Not to do so was a sign of individual weakness (Weber, 1992). Rather than people being seen as more or less at a similar level therefore, increasing differences in wealth (and in power) were recognized, particularly in the difference between those in the village and those in other areas of Trinidad and beyond – and such differences may not have been what were expected following the promises of Independence of a better time for all. It was against those who had done well and had acquired wealth and power, seemingly through magic, that accusations of devil pacts and devil-worship were made.

Taussig (2010) also talks about the nature of relationships found in peasant societies, trade often being undertaken on a personal level. This can be connected to the use of *obeah* which was focused on individuals in the local area- *obeah* might be used to stop a competitor doing well and taking too much, as when a fisherman's boat has been 'tied' for example. However, through modernity and capitalist growth, networks, relationships and connections were worldwide, for example multi-national corporations, arms of US government and EU policy were seen to affect Trinidad and Trinidadian national policy, trade and wealth. These were therefore seen to have an impact on the local area, even if this was through exclusion from these. *Obeah* was ineffective against such huge corporations– who would a spirit be sent on and how? Many identifiable leaders of these were seen as being involved in devil-worship, the actions of such corporations being led by the Devil. It was down to the individuals to protect themselves from this- alongside growth in power and influence of these organizations, and decreased role of the Trinidadian State, there was also an increasing stress on individual responsibility for their own wellbeing.

Related to all of the above has been another change which can be related to a tension between peasant and (neoliberal) capitalist worldviews. I have linked *obeah* to peasant worldview and suggested that this has come up lacking in relation to changing circumstances, including the active nature of the Devil, as (largely) did the form of Catholicism practiced in the area.[10] Evangelical Christianity was better suited to dealing with these changes and to a world recreated through neoliberalism. Gledhill also notes that the Catholic Church remained antagonistic to neoliberalism on grounds of ideology (2007, p336) and Comaroff and Comaroff link neoliberalism to the growth and spread of 'innovative occult practices and money magic, pyramid schemes and prosperity gospels' (2000, p292). I explore ways in which evangelical Christianity can be aligned with neoliberalism and modernity in more depth in the next chapter but it is worth noting here that this form of Protestant cosmology brought in and drew on an internality, a focus on the self, personal development and self-scrutiny in a way that *obeah* could not. Evangelical Christianity also suggested a way of dealing with *obeah* and with problems raised through neoliberalism by demonizing both of these as being the responsibility of the Devil who could be tackled by a more-powerful relationship with God.

The historian Keith Thomas (1991[1971]) writes that the attraction of witch-beliefs was that they enabled redress- 'By personalizing their misfortunes, the victims were able to remedy their situation', for example by using protective amulets and counter-charms. Witch-beliefs did not explain misfortune in general

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[10] I have not gone into depth on the relationship between *obeah* and Catholicism here, but *obeah* was able to fairly comfortably sit within Catholicism in a way that was not possible with Protestantism. The ability of Catholicism to sit with cosmologies that were ritualistic and 'magical' in their approach has been noted elsewhere, for example by the historian Keith Thomas in his work focusing on post-reformation England (1991). He suggests that in some ways the Catholicism of this period was similar to magic in that the Catholic mass was associated with magical power and 'the mere pronunciation of words in a ritual manner could effect a change in the character of material objects' (1991, p37). The Catholic host was also seen to contain magical powers. Such understandings were also repeated to me within Trinidad, some people seeing prayers said in churches to work in a similar way to spells, the words spoken holding the power to effect a change, that lighting a candle in church on someone would impact on them and that Catholic mass and rituals had a power in themselves. However Thomas notes that following the Reformation there were Protestant attacks on sacramental magic and people became unwilling to believe that physical objects could change their nature by a ritual of exorcism and consecration (1991, p86). There was a change in popular conception of religion and magic and religion split; 'By depreciating the miracle-working aspects of religion and elevating the importance of the individual's faith in God, the Protestant Reformation helped to form a new concept of religion itself' (1991, p88)- an understanding that obedience to God's commandments and individual moral behaviour effected prosperity, safety, health and success- the notion of 'providence' (1991, p103).

but in particular, ‘someone living in close proximity, explained local and personal misfortune’ (1991, p648). Thomas makes a distinction between witchcraft and magic as being focused on individual and limited problems as opposed to religion, suggesting that the former were ‘miscellaneous recipes, not a ‘comprehensive body of doctrine’. Christian faith was instead ‘a guiding principle, relevant to every aspect of life, magic was simply a means of overcoming various specific difficulties’ (1991, p761-2). This same understanding can be applied to *obeah* and evangelical Christianity in the village. *Obeah* was not a sufficient explanation for, or protection from, pollution in the sea, chemicals in food, a corrupt national government and justice system, the workings of supranational organizations, tsunamis, recession and climate change. Instead of local forces it was now these national and international powers which were at work in the village. Rather than being at the mercy of these general and external forces, evangelical Christianity offered a close link to God who was referred to as ‘the ultimate *obeahman*’. Through Him all evils were protected against and He was in ultimate control. Appealing to and forming a strong relationship with God was therefore one of the few things that people locally could do about their situation, and which might give them a degree of safety in such unpredictable times. God was order and certainty to combat the Devil’s disorder and uncertainty. Furthermore, the individual relationship that evangelical Christianity emphasized through its practices allowed any individual to protect themselves without relying on others, and provided a means for safety and protection without having socio-political or economic power. The Devil was disorder, the disorder resulting from a form of neoliberal modernity experienced by Trinidad and the village itself.

9. The Devil is disorder

Following on from the chapters presented above, I argue that it was the particular post-colonial context in which the village found itself: politics, jobs and commerce (and therefore money and power) having moved to other areas of Trinidad; high rates of crime and violence and the perception of an ineffective judicial system within Trinidad; a perception of being excluded from the attention of the State and the dominance of Indo-Trinidadian politics and interests; exposure to global uncertainty and dangers such as through financial recessions, natural disasters, chemical poisoning of the environment and dominance of nefarious government agencies (such as the CIA) and international companies (such as drug-companies), as well as existing Christian cultural understandings that have provided the background out of which it was possible for evangelical Christianity to emerge as a prominent way of knowing the world. It was through these understandings that the Devil was identified as a key presence needing to be dealt with and addressed, the cause of uncertainty, anxiety and disorder in the world. Whereas in the past, individual and social problems might have been able to be solved through the use of *obeah* to place or remove a spirit from someone, such measures were insufficient to address so many complex problems, many of which originated from elsewhere and lacked a clear individual leader on whom to send on and/or remove a spirit from. Evangelical Christianity therefore provided comprehensive cover from all of these, individuals needing only to focus on a relationship with God, the ultimate *obeahman*.

The appeal of evangelical Christianity locally was therefore heavily influenced by the figure of the Devil who was seen to be acting on the world. It was this active Devil who not addressed through the older churches, particularly for those who felt current insecurities most acutely. These could be tackled by evangelical Christianity however, whether through churches or by taking on these understandings and practices outside the churches. The cultural, historical and contemporary context therefore shaped evangelical Christianity, but was also itself shaped by it. In shaping each other, the context and this version of evangelical Christianity were active, not static and clear-cut but changing over time, differing for different people. Throughout these pages I have argued that cosmological understandings were bitty, messy, changing ways of knowing, which people come to know through time, through talking to others, through newspapers, the internet, television, radio and books and through their own experiences as well through attendance at churches. I have argued too that these culturally specific and bitty understandings which coalesced together emerged from local contexts, were shaped and created by practices and had a material effect on the body and the State. Both at the level of individual bodies and the metaphorical body of the State, these understandings created two types of bodies: moral and maintained bodies- bodies that were healthy and Christian, and bodies that lacked morality and maintenance- bodies that were open to the working of evil spirits. There was therefore a similar framing of bodies at the level of individuals and at the level of the State, indicative of a particular relationship between these, as well as both being part of an all-encompassing moral order. In this chapter I examine the cultural and historical situatedness of these cosmological understandings, particularly the relationship between individuals and the State, to examine why these understandings take such forms. I place these within the wider context of the worldwide growth of evangelical forms of Christianity suggesting that this is a powerful framework through which to understand and deal with contemporary issues within Trinidad and the positions of the individual and the State.

Changing circumstances and cosmologies: framing the '*ol time*

Discussions about changes over time were part of people's everyday rhetoric. People were aware of being part of a wider world system, changes to this and implications for the local area- for example the closing of local estates and Trinidad's reliance on money from oil. Broadly such changes suggested a failure of the promises of Independence- overall life had not got better in the ways people thought it might. People also noted a movement away from concerns with public good to private concerns. Alongside these a re-conceptualization of misfortune also occurred- less likely now to be caused by an individual putting a spirit on another through *obeah* as was the case in the past, more likely to have a less tangible source- global threats such global warming, the nefarious and secret workings of the CIA and world-wide recession.

Changes that have occurred in people's cosmological frameworks over time can be patched together not only from individual's accounts but from previous ethnographies of the area. There are clear differences in practices and concerns in the fieldwork undertaken in the local area by Herskovits and Herskovits (1947) in 1939, Littlewood (1992) in 1980-1982 and myself in 2011-2012. These three periods of fieldwork can be loosely linked to three time periods in the history of Trinidad. Herskovits and Herskovits undertook their work during the colonial period (the *ol'time* as it was seen locally). Littlewood's work took place following Independence and the Black Power movement of the 1970s, before the 1980s oil boom, subsequent recession and the 1990 coup. My fieldwork occurred after these events, during a period noted by people locally (as well as in newspapers) as a time of high crime and violence, and of course the State of Emergency also occured while I was in the field.

While the Herskovits' research (1947) did not focus on the Trinidadian colonial government, this was part of the background context of their work which was largely based on understandings of cultural transmission (in this case, remnants of African tradition still visible). Nevertheless their ethnography, 'Trinidad Village' (1947) gives an extensive overview of village life in the 1930s including: relationships between households, churches, men and women, the local area and Tobago; legal concerns presented to the local court house (including those being prosecuted for attending 'Shouters' services); lodges and systems of saving; and local employment, shops, services and 'customs' such Reel Dances. Through this work the salient issues for those in the village appeared to be local concerns, although it could be argued that distrust and dissatisfaction with the colonial government would be unlikely to make it into accounts given to a colonial ethnographer (nor were indeed likely to make it into the ethnographer's own writing). The Devil is not a dominant force in the pages of this work and a vastly different and less risky world is presented in comparison to my fieldwork experiences and people's accounts of devilish disorder in the coming of the End of Days. It was this colonial period, when Herskovits and Herskovits undertook fieldwork, which is referred to by people in the notion of the *ol'time*. This was never referred to explicitly as the colonial period and was a particular, rosy version of life- a specific construction of a time different to the contemporary period. The *ol'time* was recalled as a happier time, when things were more ordered and controlled and, crucially, when the Devil did not have such a dominant presence on the earth. This was also a time when, as local people recalled and Herskovits and Herskovits wrote, the local area was thriving (1947). As well as estates where people worked harvesting citrus, nutmeg, cocoa and other goods for world markets, there was a government sub-office in the village where those working locally would get paid and shops in which those who had just been paid would spend their money. The roads to and from the area were maintained, as were the bush and the seawall, and there was a regular boat service that took people along the north coast to other areas of Trinidad. This was also a time, I was told, where young people respected their elders, there was less crime, young people did not leave the area to look for work, things functioned. The *ol'time* was a more moral time.[1]

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[1] The construction and comparison between the *ol'time* and the present within the local context is also interesting to consider in relation to Austin-Broos' work in Jamaica. For Austin-Broos (1997), the construction of Pentecostalism and other religions in Jamaica came about in part through the legacy of the aftermath of slavery, missionaries encouraging Jamaican Christians to 'associate closely, as does the Bible, the passage from slavery to freedom, from sin to salvation' (1997, p238). However slavery was little mentioned in the village, instead there was a constant referral back to the *ol'time* as a better, less devilish time. This was not therefore Meyer's 'complete break with the past' (1998), nor the negative images of slavery which are more apparent in Austin-Broos' work, instead the past recalled a better time. Likewise, images of salvation were little drawn on- they were not substantial enough for everyday living. Of greater concern was personal morality and so protection by God, the importance of seeking fully comprehensive cover for getting through daily life rather than focusing on what may occur in the afterlife. The construction of an imminent arrival of the End of Days, plus a focus on individual morality and moral actions in everyday life also gave more of a focus on the here-and-now rather than salvation, a focus that is found in many African religions. While evangelical

During Littlewood's time in the field, Black Power uprisings and other related political events took place and formed part of the background context to his work. Littlewood noted a distrust in politics but this was not associated with the role of the Devil (Littlewood, personal communication). In contrast however, during my period of fieldwork, people did not refer to these political demonstrations, although I did hear reference to these outside of the village. Unlike Littlewood's interlocutors, people were concerned about politics and world events but rather than attempting to challenge wider systems, individuals focused on their own personal spirituality and moral standing. They were not part of wider social movements. People talked about the years following Independence in negative terms, Dr. Eric Williams' speech declaring 'massa day done' being seen to pave the way for employment programmes where people 'work two hours, get paid for a day', and a general reliance on the State and inherent laziness that this had provoked in a large sub-group of Trinidadians. This sub-group was identified both locally and more broadly in Trinidad as largely male and mostly Afro-Caribbean, Indo-Trinidadians being seen to have a different and more successful approach to business ventures. In Littlewood's time in the field there were rumours that Dr. Eric Williams was a member of the Rosicrucians who used spirits and his lodge-links to gain his position (Littlewood, personal communication), and while these accusations were still present they had greater impact during my fieldwork where such spiritual connections were seen as explicitly devilish. Much of this time period, the years following Independence, was left out of local historical recollections, with a focus on the *ol'time* omitting this period, folding time so that the *ol'time* could be compared directly to the present day.

Christianity in the village was future-orientated therefore, in reality most of the sermons, conversations and concerns raised were linked to contemporary circumstances and daily living, perhaps for a number of reasons. The cultural stress on continual maintenance of the body (and relationships to spirits) may have pressed a focus on the here-and-now, or a form of Caribbean pragmatism that focused on practical and effective activity on immediate problems rather than longer-term philosophizing may have meant that this aspect of the evangelical Churches operated differently in the local context. In addition it is worth noting that the period of slavery in Trinidad was far shorter than in Jamaica and this may also have impacted on this cultural difference.

Remembering in such a way meant that a sharp historical contrast could be made between the *ol'time* and the present. Through such a framing the presentation of contemporary times became a comparison to what had once been- there was less employment, shops, status and power than in the past, local roads and the seawall that in the past were maintained were now collapsing, the previously maintained and separated bush was encroaching on the village and there was a perception of being left behind and being vulnerable to crime and violence in a way that did not occur previously. In comparison to the ordered past, contemporary times were marked by disorder and the presence of the Devil. The Devil had always been there, an entity that existed in the *ol'time* also, but he was now more visible in the disorder of current times. The *ol'time* was a moral time, current times were not.

The promises of Independence as a better time had not appeared to have paid off for local people, at least in how these time periods were recalled. Although no one suggested, nor I think would suggest, that being under colonial rule was better than self-government, the perception of *ol'time* order recalled in the memories of older people was markedly different to the current period. The Devil's increased presence was seen as the key reason for this difference, the figure of the Devil himself forming a way of interpreting and dealing with why a period that *should be* better than the past (a period of self-governance rather than colonial rule), had not occurred- a disorder in the cause and effect of events. Over time the local area had moved from thriving economically to being more marginal, not only economically but with the growth of the Indo-Trinidadian role in government, both politically and in terms of ethnicity. Poor roads and removal of the train network meant the area was also isolated geographically. Such increased presence of the Devil therefore required stronger and more effective forms of protection, at the same time as those in the local area felt abandoned and on the periphery of the State.[2] In addition,

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[2] As well as comparing the past and the present, a moral comparison was of course also made between the local area (and people within in) and those 'outside'.

reductions of former government provisions (such as employment schemes) and the growth of the private sector also meant that the individual's relationship to the State had altered between these time points- the *ol'time* government offering a form of protection and dependency while the contemporary State did not provide such a reliance, instead promoting a neoliberal subjectivity where it was down to individuals to take more control over their own circumstances. Protection and control were no longer at the level of the State therefore, but had to be undertaken at the individual level- protection (and ongoing maintenance) from the Devil an individual matter. Tools for self-protection and personal control could be provided by more evangelical and charismatic Christian approaches which also focused on individuals and did not need intermediaries, Catholicism and *obeah* being too limited for such a task. While little (aside from prayer) could be done about devilish interference at the national level, individuals were able to work on the moral position of their own bodies. It was what was inside a person that counted therefore, individual behaviour and bodily health indicative of what was within.

In the local context therefore, I suggest it was the active role of the Devil together with a decreased ability to rely on the State and increased need for individual tools for protection which drew people to evangelical Christian approaches, rather than the promotion of these churches themselves. The cosmological frameworks of the *ol'time*- peasant economies and image of limited good, Catholicism, *obeah* and individuals dependent on the State- were limited in how they addressed contemporary issues. Evangelical Christianity with its increased focus on the individual, comprehensive cover and more a contemporary cosmological framework could supplement, reinterpret and replace these understandings, and of course could provide protection from the Devil, a Devil who was constructed in a particular way.

The Devil and disorder

While part of wider Christian theology (and especially present in evangelical approaches), the position of the Devil in the village was particularly dominant. The Devil loomed large in everyday life and was viewed as the underlying responsible force within many discourses and practices. Such a presence suggests that he (and to a lesser extent the figure of Job), were particularly important in local cosmological understandings in a way that marks these as different to Christian communities elsewhere. As discussed in the previous chapter, Taussig (2010) proposes that the figure of the Devil can be invoked when peasant communities are confronted with a capitalist system,[3] the Devil becoming a personification of capitalism. In the village too, the Devil was associated with capitalism and to wider modernity. However rather than being just a personification of capitalism, in this context the Devil was a personification of the disorder and changing morality resulting from modernity and new forms of capitalism.

A connection between disorder and evil can be found more broadly in anthropological work. Parkin, in his introduction to his book ‘The Anthropology of Evil’ draws together how evil is constructed in the chapters and various ethnographic examples in his edited collection (1986a). These descriptions are strikingly similar. In these different contexts evil is constructed as connected to being unclean, ugly, disordered, or crooked, linked to chaos, the physically rotten and misshapen, to dirt and to a sense of physical incompleteness or unwholesomeness and the disruption of order. Parkin also describes the concept of evil from his own fieldwork in Bantu Africa and suggests that evil in the Mijikenda language, and in Bantu more generally, links defilement with disorder and chaos- if something is spoiled it is not only ugly but also confusing or not clearly understandable (Parkin, 1986b, Chapter 13). It is not just in the Trinidadian context that that evil is linked to disorder and chaos therefore.

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[3] In Trinidad of course, the country has always been part of the capitalist system and, as previously discussed, Mintz argues that the creation of ‘proto-peasantry’ was a response, and form of resistance to wider capitalism (Mintz, 1974; 1979; 1986)

In Christianity more broadly, evil is linked to the Devil. Parkin describes Christianity as retaining the ‘opposition of the less-than-whole (fallen Satan) to the whole (omnipotent God)’(1986a), but without generally converting this to equal or almost-equal forces which he suggests does occur in other religious traditions (such as Hinduism and Buddhism). This is also the case of course in the local context- the Devil is strong but God is in ultimate control. For Parkin this suggests that a sense of incompleteness, imperfection, or we might add, disorder, can be seen as either an inevitable or necessary weakness of a cosmic whole, or as a threat to the whole which it was once part of. People within a society therefore have to decide whether evil is ‘a tolerable weakness or a power to be curbed’ (Parkin, 1986a). I suggest that in Trinidad, while previously seen as an inevitable weakness in the cosmic order, the disorder visible in the State (and also sometimes the body) has for many people at a local level become more than a tolerable weakness, the Devil’s increasing hold on the world was concerning and should be protected against. The Devil was not new, evil and sin were not new, but contemporary social and political problems represented a disorder that was far beyond what was previously recalled (i.e. in the *ol‘time*).

Such changes in understandings of evil may also connect to differences between Catholic and Protestant views of sin. Taylor suggests that Catholics and Protestants have different views of this. He proposes that through the concept of Original Sin and the practice of confession, Catholicism can absorb the notion of the necessity of evil and the existence of spiritual beings and is therefore better able to take in animism than Protestantism (1986, p39-40), as also described earlier in relation to *obeah*. Protestantism does not facilitate confession in such a way however, sins must be confessed individually in a relationship between the sinner and God. Taylor suggests that this lack of confession machinery in the Protestant church has led Protestants to seek other forms of confession, for example in psychoanalysis (1986, p40).[4] For Protestants, Taylor states, the world is divided into two, the world of sinners outside the congregation and the world of non-sinners within the congregation (1986). Certainly local churches' concern for the internal morality of their members was a central feature of the different churches in the village, more so when they were in competition for each other in terms of members. However concern about the morality of the members of the Catholic church was also evident locally- this church was also part of the local church market. Also perhaps significant was that the local Catholic church now had no facilities for confession (the Catholic priest was not often in the area and confession could not be heard by the nun in residence). Local practices around sin in the Catholic church may be influenced by the practicalities of the church's set up and position in relation to the other (Protestant) churches in the area, as well as the fact that it was essentially competing with these. In the village, sin, even for Catholics, was an individual experience and had to be dealt with individually.

Christian theology (and local cosmology) suggests that it was impossible to know the Devil without becoming embroiled with him- to know the Devil was to be a devil-worshipper. Gaining an understanding of the Devil, and thus how to deal with him, could only be done by knowing God. Knowing who or what was of God meant that what was not of God could also be recognized- something that was not godly was de facto devilish. This involved learning how to discern between whether it was the Holy Spirit or the Devil (or a devilish spirit) who was talking and guiding the individual. God and the Devil were constructed in relation to each other (good and evil),[5] and each defined the other. This clear

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[4] In the context of the village, the relationship between the individual and God was a strong focus of evangelical Christian understanding and practice, perhaps in a way that psychoanalysis might meet elsewhere but which was not popular (not accessible nor necessarily desirable) on a local level.

[5] As Russell in 'The Devil: Perceptions of Evil from Antiquity to Primitive Christianity' cited in Caplan writes; 'the figure of Satan is comprehensible only when it is seen as the "counter-principle of Jesus Christ"'. How Christ saves therefore has to be 'understood in terms of its opposition to the power of the devil. That is the whole point of the New Testament' (1977, p.237, 248, cited in Caplan, 1986,p124). There has to be a Devil in order for Christian salvation to be

dichotomy was referred to throughout my fieldwork and can be considered in relation to Littlewood's more recent work on the Advent of the Adversary. In this paper, Littlewood proposes that when the limits of a particular novel healing system are reached, when it is unable to account for internal dissent, external challenges, failed predictions and healing or sickness and debility within the group, then a second negative principle is introduced which is in continual conflict with the first healing principle (Littlewood, 2015). Again this proposes a necessary relationship between positive healing forces and negative forces- wholly positive forces do not fully account for the experiences of sickness and misfortune, there is a point where the negative must be explained. Whether Littlewood's thesis can be applied to Christianity broadly is debatable but in evangelical Christianity in the local context, the relationship between God and the Devil in causing health and illness and success and misfortune was clearly made, at least at a theoretical level.[6]

This opposition between God and the Devil also created a black and white world where there was good and bad but no in-between. This meant that other spirits that were previously viewed as ambiguous were reinterpreted in this light- often as devilish. As noted earlier, this was the case with the somewhat ambiguous spirit creatures and spirits that inhabited Trinidad, for example Papa Bois protecting the forest and doing harm only to those who took too much from it.[7] Caplan writes of this also occurring with Hindu Spirits in Pentecostal Christianity in South India (Caplan, 1986), while Meyer describes the same for the Ewe god and spirits in Ghana (1999). Parkin notes that in his fieldsite, whether his interlocutors converted to orthodox Islam or fundamental Christianity, both such new religions to the area made a clear distinction

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so powerful and evangelical Christianity, including in the local context, placed a great emphasis on salvation through God and rejection of the Devil and devilish practices.

[6] The practicalities of why the godly also suffered (and the story of Job) can be seen as another step in this argument.

[7] As Vitebsky notes, such ambiguity is more common to animistic cosmologies where spirits may be attached to nature and natural forces (personal communication). Papa Bois and the other spirit creatures in Trinidad could fall into this category.

between good and evil, teaching that *a person themselves* is either good or evil and marking a change from a relativized to an absolute moral evil (1986, p11-12). By viewing these spirits as devilish Meyer argues, people are given a way to be able to deal with these spirits- evangelical Christianity does not dispute their existence but further gives people the tools they need to work against these, one of the appeals of Pentecostal Christianity for her Ewe interlocutors (1999). Meyer suggests that Pentecostalism allows individuals to:

> …mediate between indigenous attitudes towards spirits and Christianity and at the same time face the contradiction that their daily lives actually fit with neither indigenous nor modern nor Christian ideals…By offering a discourse and ritual practices pertaining to demons, believers are enabled to thematise continuously the 'old'. (1999, p212).

In Meyer's work then, the figure of the Devil was related to the old and to old ways. Ewe tradition and modern cultural circumstances pulled individuals in different directions in their everyday lives and Meyer's work has been seen as an account of a relationship between modernity and Christianity. In my fieldwork and in a different account of a relationship between Christianity and modernity, the Devil was very much connected to the present. For Meyer's interlocutors, the Devil 'provides a channel through which they may return to the local conditions that they (strive to) leave behind' (1999, p215), whereas in the Trinidadian village I worked in, the image of the Devil was a way of understanding current circumstances and how these were different to the past. Through both Meyer's (1999) and my fieldwork, accounts of evangelical forms of Christianity and their relationships with modernity emerge, and through these different Christianities, different modernities, are visible. Both these accounts present not only a moralized world, but also moralized time periods. Contrary to Meyer's work, it was the past that was more moral than the current period and it was this current and present Devil, embodiment of disorder and new forms of capitalism and modernity that individuals needed to address. New tools and knowledge of how to do this, and an individualistic approach, were thus required for pragmatic solutions and practices rather than a matter of material gain and new explanations.

Evangelical Christianity in the cultural context of the village

It is a general trend that Pentecostalism and other forms of evangelical Christianity are growing worldwide (Coleman, 1998; Robbins, 2004b), particularly in post-colonial settings and among those at the lower socio-economic levels of these societies (Robbins, 2004b). As suggested in the literature above (e.g. Austin-Broos, 1997; Meyer, 1999) evangelical Christianity differs across contexts in form, content and practice. Crucially it also differs in its central concerns- the key feature on which a culture places greatest importance. Joel Robbins' work on conversion to Baptism by the Urapmin in Papua New Guinea, for example, concludes that the Urapmin over-riding concern with morality and law-keeping is foundational to their form of Christianity- they 'built their understanding of Christianity on the bedrock of their grasp of the colonial imperative of lawfulness' (2004a, p83). In Meyer's work with the Ewe in Ghana it was the image of the Devil which brought together different evangelical Churches in the area, the Devil and his demons linked to Ewe religion and people's desire to return to the old ways (1999). Like Meyer's interlocutors therefore, the Devil was the central feature of this new Christian approach in the village however instead being a link to *previous or alternative* religious understandings, the Devil was tied to *current* social and political circumstances in Trinidad- to disordered bodies and the disordered State.

The appeal of evangelical Christianity in such different contexts is, perhaps unsurprisingly, context-specific. Caplan (1986) suggested that Pentecostal practices in Southern India had been taken up by the Protestant urban lower classes because they were viewed as providing biblical justification for wider cultural understandings about evil nature and sources and deliverance from this- 'Control over the malign forces in the world is the privilege of all True

Believers, and requires only what is regarded as within the reach of anyone- surrender to Jesus' (Caplan, 1986, p.125). For Meyer, the appeal of Christianity to the Ewe in Ghana was that it offered a means to achieve relatively high and prosperous position in colonial society, an interpretation and way of dealing with the past and (through churches) practices to cope with everyday problems (Meyer, 1999).[8] Drawing together wider literature in this field, Joel Robbins' 2004 book on Urapmin conversion to Christianity notes two general scholarly approaches to conversion to Christianity and other world religions. The first of these he terms 'utilitarian', an appeal due to the benefits that converts receive by converting in terms of material goods, power, position, prestige etc. The second is an 'intellectualist' approach which views converts as being attracted to a new religion as it brings meaning to new situations that otherwise defy 'traditional' understandings of the world. Both of these can be seen in the examples above and Robbins argues that they may work together to produce a two-stage model of conversion; utilitarian approaches explain the initial appeal of a new religion while intellectualist approaches explain why people may stay and deeply engage with the this (Robbins, 2004a, p.87).

While applicable to other contexts, neither of these models can be directly applied to the growth and appeal of a particular form of Christianity in a context where people were already familiar with, and drew their current cosmological understandings from Christianity, as occurred in the village. Robbins' (2004a) approach, and the others on whom he draws, look at the change from one religious system to another. However Christianity has been an essential part of

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[8] This led Meyer to suggest that Pentecostalism in different contexts does not offer a new content but a new form through which to express ideas, which can become localized and culturally specific (Meyer, 1999). Although this is a tidy and attractive-sounding argument, I am not entirely convinced by the split Meyer makes between form and content in relation to Pentecostal Christianity (1999). Various problems in the distinction between form and content are taken up by Littlewood and Dein in their introduction to their edited volume Cultural Psychiatry and Medical Anthropology (2000) and while their work focuses on psychiatric illness for the most part, some of these criticisms can also be applied in this context I think. These include the problems in making a clear distinction between content and form and the implied importance of one over the other, however perhaps most relevant for the discussion here is that a split between form and content suggests that one really does stay the same across different contexts. According to Meyer's (1999) argument therefore, Pentecostal Christianity form, content and cultural context are distinct entities and not co-created and integrally connected, an approach which I see as too clear cut and not recognizable in the context of the village.

Trinidad since the virtual annihilation of the local population in the 17th century. Trinidadian Christianity and Christian understandings of the world have also always sat alongside or included understandings of *obeah*, free-floating spirits and spirit creatures living in the world. Unlike these other contexts, there was no one over-arching and clear religious system to change but various shifting understandings, assemblages of knowledge that were developed and drawn upon from the understandings of spirits in West African religions, European understandings from Spain and France of Christianity and spirit creatures, the Christianity of the American Baptists who came to Trinidad after the United States War of Independence as well as influences from East Indians indentured labourers (both Hindu and Muslim) and Chinese and other migrants to Trinidad. That there was evil in the world, and that the Devil was responsible for this was not new to the area, but the contemporary experience of a high degree of devilish interference was far more novel.

Furthermore, instead of the implication of an already-developed and clear set of Christian practices being imported into an area from the outside (albeit in Robbins' work, in various stages and with differing elements of Christianity having salience in the local context), such practices and knowledge were co-constituted from existing practices and understandings, together with evangelical Christian approaches from elsewhere. Such approaches included visiting missionaries and church leaders from the USA, Canada as well as elsewhere in Trinidad and the Caribbean, and through various media such as evangelist television and radio shows, websites and literature- evangelical Christianity in Trinidad was connected to worldwide networks as much as other aspects of Trinidadian culture. Rather than drawing on arguments around conversion to examine the local context therefore, work on the development of knowledge, and of scientific knowledge- the accumulation of bits of information to a wider overarching and contestable framework and which ties this to social and historical changes- is perhaps more productive for the Trinidadian context. For example, Foucault suggests that knowledge emerges from particular epistemological fields- historically situated times and places which form conditions of possibility for such knowledge to emerge (Foucault, 2002 [1966]). Knowledge is linked to social, cultural, political and historical conditions through which some understandings become more dominant than others. Latour's work on the Pasteurization of France is an example of this. He argues that the success of Pasteur's biology and methodology need to be understood within a particular historical convergence of conflicting interests and social forces which Pasteur was able to galvanise in a particular way to win over the French public and establishment (1988).[9] This interrelationship between building a society and its (in this case, scientific) knowledge is an approach that comes together in Foucault's understanding of the episteme- the epistemological field forming the conditions of possibility for knowledge to develop in a particular time and place (2002). Such a description is more fitting to the context of the village: particular conditions and experiences have contributed to contemporary cosmological understandings and practices. Knowledge about the cosmological is formed from both internal and external discourses, experiences and understandings. Central to these in the village were local experiences, understandings and discourses relating to changes in circumstances and modernity.

Evangelical Christianity and modernity

The term modernity in academic literature is usually used to refer to a specific process occurring over a particular period of human history. Paul Connerton

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[9] This is not a million miles away from the approach taken by Weber in his work 'The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism' in considering to what extent aspects of modern culture, and in particular capitalism, can be linked to the Reformation (1992 [1930]). Weber states that his aim is to try to understand how certain characteristics of modern culture can be traced to the Reformation, that the Reformation was not a historically necessary result of economic factors. He does not propose that the capitalistic spirit could occur only due to the effects of the Reformation and that capitalism was therefore a result of the Reformation. Instead, Weber seeks to understand whether, and to what extent, religious ideas helped form and develop the spirit of capitalism and aspects of culture which can be traced to these (1992 [1930]). However, while seeking to look at how a particular religious cosmology has impacted on notions of capitalism (and one could say modernity more generally), and even with acknowledging the involvement of other cultural elements, Weber's approach remains rather static and uneven. It lacks a two-way ongoing process where pieces come together to form an assemblage, corresponding with each other in particular time periods in particular places. It is this latter approach that is better conceptualized by scholars such as Foucault and Latour.

gives a useful illustration of this concept which he describes in the following way:

> …by modernity I mean the objective transformation of the social fabric unleashed by the advent of the capitalist world market which tears down feudal and ancestral limitations on a global scale, and psychologically the enlargement of life chances through the gradual freeing from fixed status hierarchies. Chronologically, this covers the period from the mid nineteenth century accelerating to the present (Connerton, 2009, p4).

Connerton goes on to say that although modernity is a worldwide process, he is focusing on specific Euro-American examples (2009). Such understandings of modernity are not always as nuanced, with some authors describing Euro-American examples of modernity as if these could be applied more broadly. It is a fundamental criticism of debates on modernity that modernity is implied to occur everywhere in the same way and such conceptualizations are also often built on theorizations and little actual data (Miller, 1994). Miller's work focuses on a particular form of modernity he sees as present in Trinidad, some of its elements similar to these broader conceptualizations of modernity but which occur in different ways as a result of different understandings in the Trinidadian context (1994). It is through ethnography, Miller suggests, that modernity is best conceptualized, and his work is often quoted as a key example of this and of cultural differences in modernity.

Miller and the work of other authors such as Comaroff and Comaroff (1999, 2000), Geshiere (2000), Meyer (1999) and Ong (1987, 1988), demonstrate that modernity is experienced and materializes differently in different contexts. These works illustrate, as Connerton also proposes, that these different contexts are also part of, and positioned in relation to, wider world markets so local experiences of modernity are connected to changing modernity elsewhere. We should perhaps then talk of different modernit*ies* rather than modernity as a singular object, but seeing these as also interwoven and connected. It is also worth noting that changes over time, place and in different groups of people may mean that not everyone within a culture experiences even culturally-specific forms of modernity in the same way. The positioning and cosmological understandings of those within the village, many of which can be related to what we might term experiences of modernity, were different to those in other parts of Trinidad so that these were not only specific to Trinidad but to this area of Trinidad at this particular point in time.[10]

Evangelical Christianity as a cultural response to modernity: lessons from Brazil

The relationship between modernity and evangelical forms of Christianity have been examined in many cultural contexts but here I wish to focus on work on the interaction between modernity and evangelical Christianity in Brazil. Comparisons between Trinidad and Brazil are perhaps particularly rich given some of the shared key elements of the conditions of possibility from which

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[10] While Miller's (1994) work was based in Trinidad also, his and his interlocutors' experiences were in many ways different to my own and those in the village I worked in and thus are another case of different experiences of modernity within a culture. Miller's arguments fit other areas of Trinidad, and I recognize many of his points from my experiences and those of friends in Port of Spain and the East-West Corridor. However parts of this analysis do not work for the area of Trinidad I worked in for the time period I was there (my fieldwork took place over 20 years later than Miller's). While we had different foci in our work- Miller's is far more explicitly on modernity than mine and on particular aspects of this- the area I undertook my fieldwork in was not part of Miller's general conceptualization of Trinidad, as was also the case for many people I met who lived and worked in a similar area. He, like they, largely neglected the mostly Afro-Trinidadian rural coastal areas as being part of Trinidadian life, an issue that was also apparent for those in my fieldsite. The urban and ethnically mixed setting of Miller's work also contrasts strongly with the local village's set-up and sense of marginalization. Miller's analysis of the personalization and adaptations made to people's cars for example (which again I recognized from my experiences elsewhere in Trinidad) were not as relevant in the village where the majority of people did not own cars. While many people locally had family members in the US, Canada, and less frequently, the UK, unlike Miller's interlocutors they had gone there to work (sometimes illegally) rather than attend university and were not able to return to Trinidad often. Instead they sent 'barrels' of goods back to their families and the children they had left behind, quite a different experience to Miller's interlocutors. Religiosity and church-going was barely part of Miller's work- it was not his focus, and perhaps was less a part of everyday life in those areas or at that time- however it would have been inconceivable for me to undertake ethnography in the village without including this, church membership being a key identifier for people, a key part of the social life of the village (certainly for women) and so visible in people's talk and explanations. Christian-influenced cosmology, practices and churches, particularly evangelical forms, were a crucial element of modernity in the local context.

evangelical Christianity emerges. Catholicism was brought to both Brazil and Trinidad by colonizers in the early 16th century, and both nations went on to develop sugar cane industries through the use of slavery. African understandings of spirits, and religions that draw on both Catholic and African understandings, are present in both places with practices such as Candomblé, Spiritualism, Orisha and elements of Spiritual Baptism sharing particular elements- for example in relationships with and manifestations of spirits. In both places therefore, the growth of evangelical Christianity takes place within comparatively similar religious and historical landscapes within traditionally Catholic societies, and thus we might assume that some of the experiences of modernity may be similar. Accounts of the interaction between evangelical Christianity and modernity in Brazil might then be particularly relevant for the Trinidadian context.

Brazil is a country which has seen a particularly large growth in evangelical Christianity: Chesnut (1997) notes that Pentecostalism has grown more rapidly in Brazil than in other Latin American cultures and Martin (1993) suggests that approximately one in six Brazilians are Pentecostal (1993, p.66). A number of ethnographical studies have offered explanations for its appeal. As Freston (1998) notes, Pentecostalism is ‘flexible’ and there is probably no single reason for its success, however most explanations focus around the appeal of a worldview that situates and deals with issues of modernity. Mariz (1994) suggests that Pentecostalism liberates people from limitations they experience by evil forces, offering ‘moral magic’- ‘a clear morality, defined and governed by universal and inexorable laws, in a world of flexible and particular rules. It offers an order, a logic, that the individual does not find in his life, experienced in a society devastated by economic crises, inflation, criminality, with fragile law and widespread impunity’ (Mariz, 1994, *Libertação e etica*, translated by and cited in Selka, 2010, p.300), an order also sought out in Trinidad.

Martin (1993) suggests that Pentecostalism in Brazil provides a particularly useful worldview for marginalized people, allowing a withdrawal from society and creating a space outside ‘the injuries of class and preponderant power’ (1993, p.67). This is picked up too in Selka’s work on the moral distinctions between evangelicals and followers of Candomble in Brazil. Through focusing on being morally distinct, evangelicals gain ‘a certain kind of respectability that elevates him or her above the marginal- at least in the eyes of the evangelical community’, an aspect particularly important for the ‘doubly disparaged’, those who are poor and have darker skin (Selka, 2010, p303). This can also be seen in the village with the positioning of a moral ‘us’ as compared to a less moral ‘them’ outside, again perhaps particularly important for those who are poor, based in rural areas, and are Afro-Trinidadian in a State perceived to be led by an Indo-Trinidadian government and interests.

For Chesnut, it is not only a positioning and cosmological worldview that evangelical Christianity provides, but experiences of power and healing. He suggests that Pentecostalist experiences give moments of power ‘in which a temporarily impotent believer transcends earthly station buoyed by divine force’ (1997, p.170), healing not only physical ailments but also emotional and psychological problems caused by urban poverty- addressing what he terms the ‘pathogens of poverty’. Through this framework illness is a result of living in a world without Jesus, Pentecostalism giving individuals the tools to deal with this so that being Pentecostal means ‘being a person filled with power’ (1997, p.93). This provision of tools as well as modes of understanding I argue also occurs in Trinidad- through viewing disorder and misfortune as caused by the Devil, individuals are able to undertake actions to protect themselves and improve their position.

More broadly these studies point out that existing frameworks of understanding are broken down through modernity and newer neo-capitalist discourses are brought in. Evangelical Christianity can resist such wider discourses[11] and the

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[11] For example, in his overarching review of the globalization of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity, Robbins notes that many authors stress that Pentecostal Christianity allows one to ‘cope’ with the difficulties of everyday life in a capitalist economy and can include partial

location of large evangelical centres in places such as Brazil gives a more central position to the global south, challenging the notion that globalization solely disperses outwards from dominant places elsewhere (Velho, 2006).[12] Noting that modernity is a product of interactions in which alternative Christianities are created, Velho (2006) suggests that evangelical Christianity itself 'thematizes' modernity- it recognizes and responds to wider social, political and economic changes and other modernity experiences. As Corten and Marshall-Fratini also note, Pentecostalism is not only 'a discourse within modernity but about modernity' (2001, p4), able to embody the open global network of flows brought about through modernity and globalization, flexible enough to adapt to different settings while offering a stable narrative which gives 'solid anchorage for individuals in frightening sea of possibilities and frustrations' (2001, p4). These suggest that evangelical Christianity is well-placed to help individuals make sense of and deal with modernity, and it is this aspect that I argue is particularly powerful in the village in relation to dealing with the risk and anxiety modernity contributes to.

Anxiety and modernity

Accounts of modernity in Euro-American cultures (and particularly what is termed 'late' or 'high' modernity which refer to contemporary modernity), link modernity to feelings of being out of control, anxiety and high perceptions of risk (Beck, 1992; Giddens, 1991; Wilkinson, 2001; Caplan, 2000; Furedi, 2007). Termed the 'Risk Society' thesis, the relationship of modernity to notions of risk is seen as fundamental to this approach and both Giddens (1991) and Beck (1992) have considered risk itself as central to late modernity, 'fundamental to the way both actors and technical specialists organize the social world'

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criticisms of such 'capitalist cultural modes of individualism, accumulation and desire' (2004b, p.137).

[12] Velho stresses that this growth also brings into question some more hidden assumptions, namely that 'every social group has a corresponding culture and religion, as well as essentializing conceptions that presume a defining nucleus to each religion' (2006, p.205).

(Giddens, 1991, p.3). Modernity, it is argued, produces a 'risk society' or 'risk culture', where public knowledge and debates about risk and the riskiness of everyday life, as well as the introduction of new types of risk previous generations have not faced (such as nuclear war and environmental breakdown), are present in the everyday life of the individual. Despite the actual overall reduction in life-threatening events for the individual (Lupton, 1999), this greater knowledge of risk, Giddens and Beck argue, increase Euro-American insecurity about individual position in society, ability to live in safety and increase anxiety about the future ahead.

Notions of risk were also a key consideration for people in the village, although it is worth noting that the insecurities described by the Risk Society thesis are based in Euro-American cultures and relate to ontological insecurity (Giddens, 1991) and existential anxiety (Fromm, 1969), while the increased rates of crime and violence in Trinidad mean that risks are not only ontological but *actual* risks and security issues. Despite this important difference however, the need to control and reduce individual risk- be it existential or very real- is still imperative and the process of modernity in both areas has been viewed as breaking down previous cosmological frameworks and institutions which may have otherwise addressed this. While the Risk Society thesis has typically been limited to Euro-American cultures, the consideration of anxiety and perception of risk as a consequence of the process of modernity within this literature is useful to consider in relation to Trinidad.

For the sociologist Iain Wilkinson, anxiety leaves individuals searching for cultural forms which adequately express the true origins and identity of the anxiety (Wilkinson, 2001). Where individuals remain entwined by anxiety therefore, a culture has not provided a means by which the feeling of being overwhelmed by the uncertainty of the future can be dealt with (Wilkinson, 2001, p.131).[13] This reveals a crucial difference in the village- despite the high

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[13] I have elsewhere argued that increased anxiety in Euro-American cultures has lead to increased medicalization of such experiences as a means to address these (Lynch, 2016).

prevalence of real risks and worry about nationwide disorder, the village was not entwined by anxiety. Instead there was a cultural form which expressed the origin and identity of anxiety in the village in the figure of the Devil, who embodied disorder and disruption. Once personified, this anxiety could be addressed. Anxiety and disorder were incompatible with godliness; it was not possible to have both, only one or the other. If one had God on their side, the Devil could not be successful. Such understandings were not merely abstract- rather than *representing* disorder the Devil *was* disorder, the opposite of God, who was order. Through a focus on personal morality, the individual could then keep themselves with God and with order, and keep away the Devil and anxiety. State institutions (which were in any case not seen as effective, nor as working for people locally) were not needed as the individual focused on their personal relationship with God.

This new degree of risk and disorder required a new means to deal with this, and I earlier noted a movement away from *obeah*, Catholicism, a peasant worldview and a notion of limited good and towards Protestantism and particularly evangelical Christianity, a capitalist (and neoliberal) worldview and an understanding of unlimited prosperity and exponential growth. Through such a perspective, God's power, and the Devil's influence were also limitless and general, rather than specific forces. The workings of devilish spirits within international organizations, by national leaders and non-functioning justice systems could not be solved by sending a spirit on to them- these were distant and generalized evils, there was no identifiable person to send an *obeah* spirit on. Evangelical Christianity constructed a figure ultimately responsible for these otherwise unclear threats- the Devil. Through the development of a personal relationship with God, comprehensive cover from all risks was ensured.[14]

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[14] As well as providing a focus for anxiety and a way of dealing with generalized risks, evangelical Christianity also fitted into other important cultural concerns and understandings in the village. As considered in more detail in Chapter 6, the wider Trinidadian concern for retaining freedom (Miller, 1991, 1994) was also met through this form of Christianity. Evangelical Christianity placed an emphasis on individual freedom to choose whether to follow God or the Devil, the ability to exercise this freedom and the consequences from doing so forming a key element of Christian practices. Every day the individual made personal choices

Evangelical Christianity and the individual and individual bodies

Individualism as an orientation was also seen to rise at the same time as the growth of risk (within modernity), and is part of a culture of neoliberalism (e.g. Gledhill, 2007). According to the Risk Society approach, alongside risk and individualism there came a growth in what Caplan calls an 'ongoing search for morality' (2000, p.6), where individuals looked to control and improve themselves rather than the social environment. The very position of the individual in relation to the world around them was seen to change through these accounts of (Euro-American) modernity, with the individual located as the seat of power rather than external forces- risk the responsibility of humans rather than notions of fate or destiny (Lupton, 1999). Despite the differences Miller (1994) suggests between Trinidadian individualism and the Euro-American (largely influenced by the US) individualism that influences the Risk Society thesis (1994), such general conceptualizations do fit well with the understandings of people in the village. Individuals were responsible for their morality, and were part of a church that promoted and assisted with this. While such understandings were also taken on board locally by members of the local Catholic church, this focus on individual morality was largely seen to have developed through Protestantism.

Unlike Catholicism and *obeah* understandings, Protestantism involved self-scrutiny of personal sins meaning that individuals had to monitor and maintain their moral positioning. The focus was less on a Priest or an *obeahman* who might remove sin or a bad spirit, and more on the individual self-examining his or her own morality. Meyer (1999) suggests that a focus on individual experiences of, and contact with, the divine are a particular characteristic of

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about who to follow as they undertook actions in their daily lives; the opportunity to change one's choice therefore being possible several times each day. Such freedom to make these choices could be lost through spiritual afflictions, a punishment for those who did not choose well.

Pentecostal churches which encourage individuals to pray for themselves (something she compares to the church-led Lord's Prayer found in other churches). In this way, church members have an individualized access to the spiritual, something that is also expressed by the testimonies in services of those who have had miraculous experiences. Furthermore, Meyer reminds us that in Pentecostal Christianity the relationship between the individual and the Holy Spirit is not a permanent one but has renewed continually through prayer and skills developed to do this (Meyer, 1999). Such a focus on constant monitoring and maintenance fits into wider Trinidadian understandings of monitoring and maintaining the body, as does the need to know God for oneself through the development of skills to form a direct relationship. In both evangelical Christianity and the village more broadly, knowledge about something gave power- a level of skill and ability was needed in order to be able to work effectively with God or with evil spirits. The witless and the weak were not spiritually powerful either for God or for the Devil.

Maintenance of one's own body and a connection to God can also become an end in itself through this version of Protestant Christianity. Weber describes the notion of having a 'calling' as a product of the Reformation (1992 [1930]). This new idea, suggests Weber, meant that *worldly* activities were then given a religious significance.[15] In the local context, the connection between conduct (or actions) as demonstrating personal morality, and personal concern, monitoring, and examination of these as being for (rather than against) God was also

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[15] This idea, and the associated duty to fulfill social obligations, was developed by Martin Luther and Weber sees it as one of the most important contributions of the Reformation. According to Weber, before the Reformation, people did not see their worldly activities (such as their occupations and businesses) as being in service to God (1992). Rather, worldly activities were perceived more as necessary evils and the monastic lifestyle, where people removed themselves from the world in order to contemplate God, was glorified. However the Reformation rejected this attitude and it was seen as wrong to remove oneself from the world- serving God meant participating in worldly activities because this was part of God's purpose for each individual. Labour and business therefore became part of one's duty to God and with the right theological developments, this worldliness could be transformed into a belief in the duty to prosper (Weber, 1992). As part of this therefore, and through Calvinism, Pietism and Methodism, conduct became a way of telling who was truly converted. Religious grace could not be obtained through magic or good works but must be proved through particular conduct and therefore individuals must monitor their own morality (and grace) through their own actions.

clearly seen. Again personal responsibility for individual morality was part of this, linking too to the understanding that the individual was free to act how they wished to. In the work of the historian Christopher Hill on religious and political groups in England following the Reformation, he suggests that the Puritan insistence on self-discipline was 'unthinkable without the experience of masterlessness' (Hill, 1987). Hill argues that Protestantism and Protestant sects took off at the same time as the feudal system broke down and individuals were not restricted to working the land of an overlord. Such a focus on the inner discipline promoted by evangelical approaches in Trinidad can also perhaps be related to the end of the colonial period and the perception of the failure of state institutions, 'massa day done' as the individual became their own master, not the colonial government nor the Independent state which took over.[16]

Individuals then focused on their own bodies and actions as the State no longer would, or could, do so, individuals having to take personal responsibility and control over their circumstances. A consequence of this focus on individual actions was that the State and wider systems were not challenged. This maintained the status quo therefore, good moral behaviour meaning reward in the afterlife which was seen as more important than political revolution (which would also bring further disruption and disorder), and should be left in the hands of God. The growing appeal of evangelical approaches in Trinidad particularly among those with lower socio-economic status, and the way that this retained the status quo, is interesting to compare to the history of Carnival in Trinidad. In the past Carnival was seen as being chiefly for this population, and, in fitting with other functionalist accounts of carnivals, as a short period of time where everyday rules and restrictions are inverted, only to return again a little time later thus maintaining the status quo (Humphrey, 2000). While this was

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[16] Hill (1987) notes that this change in masterlessness could provoke alarm and anxiety in some people, while for others it provided opportunity in establishing new religious and political movement. While the period of Independence in Trinidad was also a time of the development of new political and religious movements, in my time in the field this was less of a focus (and Christianity was seen as the opposite of anxiety and embodied in the figure of the Devil). Striving to be more Christian and thus more moral was a way of controlling such anxiety therefore.

significant in the development of Carnival, and particularly in what are seen as 'traditional' Carnival characters (Hill, 1985; Lovelace, 1981; Miller, 1994; Stewart, 1986), contemporary Carnival was heavily commercialized with expensive costumes not based on characters but on style, fashion and colour schemes of different *mas* bands. Involvement in the main Carnival processions was therefore beyond the means of those with less money- many of those on lower incomes who did participate taking out loans to cover their participation which they then paid off over the year (obviously not everyone could take out such loans). As discussed earlier, Churches, and particularly the evangelical churches, were for the most part very against Carnival participation[17] which they perceived as promoting the display of the body in extremely revealing outfits, heavy drinking, sexual dancing and promiscuousness. Instead they ran alternative events that took place at the same time as Carnival, but rather than being held in the heaving streets of Trinidad's larger cities these were family-based events in rural areas which involving camping and eating together. During my time in the field, Carnival was seen as related to the establishment and to tourism, aimed at young professionals living in other areas of Trinidad and not 'for' those with less money, nor those in the local area (although there was a local Carnival procession which differed to the costumes and grandeur of those held in Port of Spain and other larger places). Churches, and particularly the more evangelical churches, were therefore in direct opposition to Carnival, and yet it might be argued maintained the status quo between different socio-economic and political levels in the same way that Carnival perhaps once did.

Health, wealth and local forms of Evangelical Christiantiy

A number of features may be drawn out as providing the particular conditions of possibility for the development of local understandings and forms of evangelical Christianity. Existing understandings (such as the body in need of continual

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[17] Although the first year I was in Trinidad for carnival, the Catholic church controversially, and for the first time, had its own *mas* band in the Port of Spain Carnival. The band's costumes were inspired by the first book of the bible (Genesis), and in the following year they again entered a *mas* band this time inspired by the Book of Exodus, the second book of the Bible.

maintenance, relationships with spirits and the existence of the Devil), the position of those in the village in relation to the State and changing relationships between individuals and the State, disruption in the State, global shifts and new risks, as well as the need for way to understand and deal with these for example, have all contributed to local cosmological conceptions and practices. This is of course not a one-way relationship, nor a static one, so that cosmological conceptions and practices have also contributed to shaping evangelical Christianity, notions of individuality and relationships with spirits, and to relations with the State and beyond.

Like the wider moral order, these understandings are constantly in the process of being 'made' through practices and discourses, not existing independently of these. They have material consequences and presence, and create a just world where faithfulness is rewarded or lack of reward explained. While local cosmological understandings and forms of evangelical Christianity can be compared to, and indeed share some elements with forms of evangelical Christianity elsewhere (particularly in Brazil), I suggest that evangelical Christianity in the village is made up of an assemblage of elements and relationships which emerge and develop from a particular place, time and situation. While the specific elements of this local amalgam may not be recognizable elsewhere, this work adds to the body of work which situates local forms of evangelical Christianity and wider cosmological understandings in relation to modernity and globalization in post-colonial settings. In addition I have explored how these understandings, discourses and practices take place not only within, but also outside, particular churches and congregations at the level of communities, and how these connect to and are embedded in wider cultural conceptualizations and practices. I have focused particularly on the practices, discourses and understandings relating to individual bodies and health- personal ways in which individuals can keep the Devil at bay without recourse to, or concern for, intervention at the level of the State. This focus on individual health also suggests a more complex understanding of the 'prosperity gospel' and an emphasis of 'health and wealth' which has been linked to some evangelical Christian movements.

Evangelical Christian groups which preach the 'prosperity gospel' focus on a relationship between faith and success- the faithful will be rewarded by health and wealth. However Bielo (2007) notes the link between faith and these rewards is not a straight forward- it is not the naïve relationship often depicted but is more complicated, embedded in distinct cultural 'logics' so that links between health, wealth and faith take different forms in different places. His work with 'Christian businessmen' in the USA (Bielo, 2007) locates notions of wealth accumulation as being focused around new forms of personhood, particularly what it emically termed 'the New Mind' created through being born again. It is this 'New Mind' (which draws on US models of effective business practices and psychology) that is important for understanding how these American Evangelicals 'imagine financial success' (2007, p336), a more culturally nuanced understanding of the connection between financial prosperity and Christianity. Weber's discussion of the Protestant ethic (1992) and Taussig's (2010) link between the Devil and capitalism might also be considered more complex forms of this relationship and Martin (2011) makes the point that neither capitalism nor the Protestant ethic are static things but are susceptible to change over time. Indeed for Martin, the prosperity gospel is a particular 'mutation' of the Protestant ethic in Latin American Pentecostals, pointing out that capitalism is an incomplete system which needs to be culturally embedded in socio-political forms and value systems (2011, p.104). Within Trinidad, the understanding of wealth as indicating proximity to the Devil could be seen as another such 'mutation' which might be more common to peasant communities such as Taussig's, accumulation of wealth in (proto-)peasant communities linking to notions of limited good so that meaning that success for one created less for others. In communities more embedded in understandings of capitalism growth, more wealth could be achieved without less being available for others, and alternative models of the faith:success relationship may occur as was the case for Bielo's interlocutors.

While Bielo focuses on the complexities of the ‘wealth’ aspect of the prosperity gospel, the same focus might be applied to the ‘health’ aspect of this (remembering that these two aspects are not unrelated). Again the relationship between health and faith is not a simplistic and is embedded within wider cultural understandings. Here I suggest that particularly Caribbean understandings of the body as a container in need of attention and maintenance, conceptualizations of spirits as free-floating and able to dwell within and materially alter objects, forms of healing which draw from biomedicine, local bush medicines and engagements with spirits, and Christian (and increasingly an evangelical Christian) worldview are drawn together with changing relationships between the individual and the State, changing world markets and international relations, and current risks from crime and violence within a post-colonial backdrop. Through these individual health and moral behaviour are linked and become the foci of action and attention, also becoming indicative of who a person *is*. This is another version of health linking to faith, a nuanced and culturally embedded relationship dependent on local cultural ‘logic’. It is a situated ‘prosperity gospel’ embodied both within and outside churches, emerging from and contributing to the wider cultural landscape.

10. Job, justice and moral order

> *42:10 And the LORD turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before. 42:11 Then came there unto him all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all they that had been of his acquaintance before, and did eat bread with him in his house: and they bemoaned him, and comforted him over all the evil that the LORD had brought upon him: every man also gave him a piece of money, and every one an earring of gold. 42:12 So the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning: for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses. 42:13 He had also seven sons and three daughters. 42:14 And he called the name of the first, Jemima; and the name of the second, Kezia; and the name of the third, Keren-happuch. 42:15 And in all the land were no women found so fair as the daughters of Job: and their father gave them inheritance among their brethren. 42:16 After this lived Job an hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his sons' sons, even four generations. 42:17 So Job died, being old and full of days.*

Job, 42: 10-17, New King James Version (NKJV)

At the end of the Book of Job, God takes away Job's suffering and he is given twice his previous riches and goes on to live a long and prosperous life. While the cruelty of the Devil and the faith that Job continues to have in God, despite his ordeals, are clear themes in this story, implicitly they construct the roles of God and the Devil and notions of justice in particular ways. The characteristics of God in the Book of Job do not present an all-loving and peaceful divinity. Instead here God is strong and vengeful, almost employing the Devil to test out his most faithful- certainly it appears to be more of a game between God and the Devil at Job's expense. The Devil was not running riot in the story but was still under God's command- there was order even under this apparent disorder. Elsewhere in the Bible these stronger, more vengeful and jealous elements of God are also seen, and it was these aspects of God that were talked about within the village. I was told 'my God is a jealous God'- jealous of the worship of other idols, he was 'angry' when not listened to and communed with regularly, and 'punishing' to those who went against Him and His commandments- there would be torment coming to non-Christians at the End of Days. Aspects to God's character such as 'forgiveness' were not stressed. Like Job's God, God was seen as strong and righteous, capable of allowing horrific suffering under the Devil but ultimately able to reward- He was powerful and just above all else. The Book of Job is also one of the few places in the Bible where the Devil is seen to walk upon the Earth, and this construction of a Devil walking and present in everyday life, ready to cause distress and disorder was also the local depiction of the Devil and how he acted upon the world. The story of Job thus fitted with individual experiences of the workings of God and the Devil.

I suggest these aspects of God as powerful and just and the Devil as present were important qualities to draw on given the perceived injustice dished out to the local area and seen as evident more broadly in Trinidad and beyond. The 'politricks' of government- including scandals involving politicians such as corrupt (and convicted) members of the previous Indo-Trinidadian government, and corruption allegations involving government minister Jack Warner- as well as the inability of the legal system to catch and prosecute criminals leading to the State of Emergency meant people had little faith in State justice but did express a strong faith in divine justice. People talked of praying that the criminals and the immoral were punished, even securely knowing that they would be subject to just punishment after death. It was not just the position of Job and reason for his suffering (his morality and faith) that had salience for people locally, but through their discourses and practices they also invoked a God and a Devil who worked in a similar way to the divine entities that Job encountered: the story of Job was part of the construction of the moral order.

People could not only find meaning in the suffering of Job but could look to the just and powerful nature of God, all too familiar with the ways in which the Devil could manifest and act on the Earth. The heavy focus on this version of the Devil with these particular characteristics, and this understanding of God, are not representations found everywhere in Christianity, nor are how God and the Devil are constructed more generally in the Bible. For people locally, these were particularly meaningful constructions drawn out and focused on from wider Christian understandings as these linked with both contemporary experiences in everyday life and existing cultural conceptualisations. They were part of meaningful assemblages of concepts which were ways of knowing and interpreting everyday life and social circumstances.

Cosmologies can therefore be seen as ethno-epistemic assemblages of different understandings that ‘hang’ together. These are situated not only culturally but also historically: they were constructed, constituted and sustained by, and indeed reflected, contemporary circumstances. Notions of morality and moral order were constantly being crafted anew through everyday life, events and practices but appeared to be continuous and existing beyond the everyday as transcendent ‘natural’ values. Such cosmologies were also grounded in, expressed through and brought into being through the material- through bodies, goods and money as well as through individual practices. Even as abstract concepts these cosmological understandings emerged as integral to the physical world and to everyday life in the village.

Cosmological understandings in the village demonstrated a link between the Devil and disruption- to anxiety, corruption, violence, crime, suffering, things being out-of-place, a changed world- all aspects of contemporary life and wider experiences of what we might class broadly as ‘modernity’. I place all these here under the broader category of ‘disorder’. These can, of course, be compared to the order that God brings- security, justice, things in their right place. God was order while the Devil was disorder, embedded within wider modernity but evident, including materially, within the Trinidadian State and within individual bodies. While different authors have linked the Devil and witchcraft to modernity in different ways, I have argued that the figure of the Devil was a personification of disorder and anxiety; he was not representative of disorder but *was* disorder. The figure of the Devil had always been there, but was now more visible, more powerful and pervasive. Sprits and *obeah* practices were interpreted and understood as devilish, but in a way that removed some of the ambiguity around these- there was either good or evil, one was either for or against God. It was a clearer way of understanding the world and personal circumstances, and gave a way of dealing with the disorder and uncertainty created by the Devil.

These cosmological understandings constructed a moral order which was all-encompassing, including national and international States, figures and institutions, as well as people on a local level, and were moral understandings in which the body, health and illness and misfortune were constructed in particular ways. Bodies were containers which need to be continually maintained to keep their equilibrium, the internal content being of greater focus than bodily boundaries. The Holy Spirit or evil spirits may dwell within these container bodies, and offer protection from, or contribute to, cases of illness. Both spiritual and material forms of treatment were therefore used to heal, different configurations of these, and healers themselves, drawn on at different occasions and linked to different moral positionings. Order was thus brought through self-maintenance of the body and a relationship with God through moral practices, including constant communication with God and looking after bodily health- a continual self-examination that fits in well with Protestant understandings of morality. The relationship between God and individuals (and individual bodies) was therefore fundamental in such constructions, and the need for individuals to maintain and take care of both their bodies and their spiritual relationship with God was key in personal morality- neglecting both of these could lead to devilish intervention and disorder. These interferences and disorder could also be seen more broadly on the unmaintained State, which had not been taken care of nor maintained its spiritual relationship with God. Both individuals and the State more broadly were very much part of this moral order and were foci for morality and discipline. Similar constuctions of individual bodies were applied to understandings of the body of the nation state, creating two different sorts of bodies within these levels: bodies which were moral and maintained (and thus Christian and healthy), and bodies which were not (and thus open to the working of evil spirits)- ordered and disordered bodies that could fit into a wider moral order.

More evangelical versions of Christianity framed (and contributed to) many of these cosmological understandings therefore, as well as conceptualizations that were more specific to Trinidad and the Caribbean and to local experiences. As Meyer notes (1999), this is perhaps part of what makes these forms of Christianity so versatile and able to develop in such different contexts: different versions of evangelical Christianities emerge as they acknowledge and are informed by culturally-specific environments, as well as speaking to and linking converts to wider world structures. In the context of the village, such understandings assisted people in interpreting wider events and God's communications through these. These gave the world consistency and meaning as well as providing individuals with something they could do to look after and protect themselves and their own morality, without trying to tackle wider problems (including at a global scale) over which they may have felt they had little control. Evangelical Christianity was meaningful and productive for people locally, likely a key reason for its success.

Key conceptualizations of these cosmological understandings therefore include: the roles, opposition and powers of God and the Devil; the importance of maintenance and spiritual connection; changing world circumstances and the differences between the past (the *ol'time*) and contemporary life; and notions of fairness, justice and the corrupt who do not suffer and the moral individuals who do- back to Job again. Perhaps underlying all of these concepts are notions of order (and therefore disorder)- the holding of things together in a particular way and the avoidance of chaos. To return then to Douglas (1966), she suggests we categorize our world to create order and in so doing make (sometimes false) separations between things for the purpose of grouping and analysis, whether as scientists, anthropologists, Christians, or in our daily lives as individuals. While these ethno-epistemic assemblages which I have called cosmological understandings may not have internal order and consistency, these themselves do attempt to apply these to the wider world and to give the world meaning. I have also attempted to construct and portray order out of an inevitably messy and complex cultural context, to construct (sometimes false) separations for the purpose of presentation and analysis and to simplify (and probably make more complex) selected aspects of everyday life. I hope that I have been able to do these justice, no doubt there could have been many other interpretations and experiences that could have been drawn out.

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Appendices

Appendix I - Demographic data

While the village I refer to in my main discussions is not defined by geographical area, it is based around a particular village. I include demographic details of the village not as part of the main text but as illustrative of the population from which my observations, interviews and experiences are based. These come from three sources: census data for the village from the 2000 Trinidad and Tobago census which was the most recent available during my fieldwork, recordings of students' religious affiliation from the village high school records, and the findings of a household survey I conducted while in the village. From these sources, I have included below the most relevant data to my points in the main discussion. These are grouped below as describing the general population of the village and the religious affiliation of residents.

General population data

The Trinidad and Tobago census was undertaken through door-to-door visits by nationally trained census-takers. While the formal census aggregates the data from the whole area in order to present this, I was able to get hold of a copy of the statistics for just the local area. The 2000 census data for the village records a total of 1035 residents, 537 of whom are male (51.9%) and 498 female (48.1%). People locally estimated the local population to be a more than this however, perhaps defining the boundaries of the village differently to the census-takers to take in more of the roads leading to attached villages in the local area. Through this census, the vast majority of those locally are recorded as 'African' (n=892, 86.2%), with 23 residents recorded as 'Indian' (n=2.2%), two as 'Chinese' (0.2%), one as 'White/Caucasian' (0.1%), and 117 as 'Mixed' (11.3%). Of the local population, 381 (36.9%) are recorded as attending school, one of whom is recorded as attending university (0.1%). Across the village, 11 people are recorded as university-level educated (1.1%), 374 are secondary-school educated (36.1%), 548 recorded their highest level of education as being primary school (52.9%) while 29 (2.8%) and 4 (0.4%) recorded nursery and no education respectively. The majority of residents (90.7%) earned less than 3000 TTD per month (approx £300), 123 residents (17.3%) were recorded as earning between $2000-2999TTD, 172 residents (16.6%) as between $1000-1999TTD, and 272 (26.3%) less than $500TTD.

To supplement this census data with more specific findings, I undertook a limited household survey of the main roads through the village. I recorded a total of 193 households as well as 36 abandoned houses and 24 'guesthouses'[1] on the 12 roads I undertook the survey on. From these 193 households, I was able to gather data on 167 (26 households recorded as missing). One of the aspects I was interested in was the number of households with links to those outside the village. I had picked this up anecdotally, and it was something which spoke to the connectedness of the village, and Trinidad more broadly, to other parts of the world. This was a finding also noted by Laitinen (2002) in her work on Tobago and Miller (1994) in his earlier work elsewhere in Trinidad. Of the 167 households questioned, 141 reported having one or more family members living in Port of Spain and the East-West corridor, and 128 households reported having family members in the USA, Canada and/or the UK.

Through my time in the village I realized that the occupations which people stated when asked were not always the only means through which they made money, many people supplementing their income through selling or trading home-grown produce or home-made items such as sweets. While some people had more established and reliable incomes, this was not the case for many local people and so I do not expand in depth on occupation and income from these

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[1] These guesthouses are owed or rented by those from outside the area who use these as holiday properties. These individuals are not usually part of the local community, nor participate in community events. They are usually viewed by people in the community as wealthy and as based in areas such as Port of Spain.

data sources as these do not necessarily reflect all means of employment in the area. To give an example of the types of work undertaken, below are the details of one street- ‘Johnson Street’- as an example. Of the 14 households that I have data on (from 17 in total), the following occupations were recorded among the 35 residents:

Figure 2 - Occupations of residents on Johnson Street from household survey

OCCUPATION RECORDED	**NO.**
Infant	3
In education - 5 x school children, 1 x college student	6
Housewife	1
Shop worker - 1 x working in hardware store, 1 x working in food outlet	2
Self-employed single role- 1 x running local boutique, 1 x selling ice-cream, 1 x gardener (producing own crops from own garden to sell)	3
Self-employed mixed work – 3 x odd jobs (including one who also worked on the government employment scheme), 2 x ‘hustling’	5
Oil rig worker off shore	2
Domestic worker outside village	1
Baby-sitter	1
Security guard	4
Fireman	1
Teacher	1
Pensioner- including 1 x retired fisherman, 1 x retired security guard, 1 x retired maintenance worker, 1 x retired bus conductor	5
TOTAL	35

The remaining findings from the household survey that I wish to focus on are the religious affiliations of those within the village.

Religious affiliation

Religious affiliation within the village is recorded in the 2000 census as the following:

Figure 3 - Religious affiliation in the village, Trinidad and Tobago national census (2000)

Religion	**Number of Residents**	**Percentage**
Anglican	197	19
Baptist	299	28.9
Hinduism	7	0.7
Jehovah Witness	18	1.7
Methodist	2	0.2
Islam	9	0.9
Pentecostal	43	4.2
Presbyterian	1	0.1
Roman Catholic	167	16.1
Seventh Day Adventist	199	19.2
Other	57	5.5
None	34	3.3
Not stated	2	0.2
TOTAL	1035	100

Interestingly, the census does not discriminate between different Baptist groups that are distinguished at a local level- Spiritual Baptist and Independent International Baptist Church (also known as ‘London Baptist’). Aside from this higher recording of ‘Baptist’, the other churches with the largest congregations in my experiences in the field (Catholic, Seventh Day Adventist and Pentecostal) are reflected in these data, with the exception of the Anglican church. I was told by a number of village residents, including senior members of the Anglican church, that although there were a high number of Anglicans in the village, this was the church that had the fewest attending on a regular basis.

While for special events the Anglican church was full, on the occasions I went to 'usual' Sunday services I was one of two or the only member of the congregation at the start of the service, with the numbers increasing to between 4-8 by the end of the service.

This spread of church affiliations can also be seen in school data for the area. For the school year 2011-2012 the local High School (which also covered other local villages) recorded the following religious affiliations for their 406 students:

Figure 4 - Religious affiliation in high school children, village high school data for school year 2011-2012

Religious Affiliation Recorded	**Number Male Students**	**Number Female Students**	**Total Students**
African Ethiopian Orthodox	3	4	7
Anglican	18	14	32
London Baptist	5	7	12
Spiritual Baptist	26	27	53
Church of God	2	2	4
Hindu	1	1	2
Jehovah Witness	6	1	7
Methodist	3	2	5
Moravian	3	0	3
Muslim	4	1	5
Nazarene	0	1	1
Pentecostal	29	35	64
Rastafarian	0	1	1
Roman Catholic	43	42	85
Seventh-Day Adventist	62	47	109
Other	9	7	16

TOTAL	214	192	406

Having spent time in the area and with an awareness of the connections between churches, in the household survey I asked about both religious affiliation originally Baptized/Christened in and current church affiliation to gather a crude account of changes in affiliation. From the total of 167 households I was able to gather data on, in 63 households, residents reported having members who had changed their affiliation at least once. Fifty households reported currently having members affiliated to different churches.

In Johnson Street, the religious affiliation of the 35 residents was recorded as follows:

Figure 5 - Religious affiliations of residents on Johnson Street from household survey

Household No.	**No. in Household**	**Religion Christened/ Baptized**	**Current Church Affiliation**	**No. Occupants Changed Religious Affiliation**
1	4	Spiritual Baptist x3 Anglican x 1	Spiritual Baptist x 4	1
2	4	Spiritual Baptist x3 Moravian x 1	Spiritual Baptist x 1 Evangelical x 3	3
3	2	Spiritual Baptist x 1 Catholic x 1	Spiritual Baptist x 1 Catholic x 1	0
4	1	Spiritual Baptist x 1	Spiritual Baptist x 1	0
5	4	Anglican x 2	Pentecostal x 4	3

		Catholic x 1 Pentecostal x 1		
6	3	Spiritual Baptist x 1 Anglican x 2	Spiritual Baptist x 1 Independent (London) Baptist x 1 Rastafarian x 1	2
7	3	Spiritual Baptist x 2 Pentecostal x 1	Spiritual Baptist x 2 Pentecostal x 1	0
8	2	Spiritual Baptist x2	Spiritual Baptist x2	0
10	1	Anglican x 1	Spiritual Baptist x 1 (does not attend church)	1
11	2	Catholic x 2	Catholic x 2	0
12	2	Jehovah Witness x 1 Spiritual Baptist x 1	Jehovah Witness x 1 Spiritual Baptist x 1	0
13	3	Evangelical x 1 Anglican x 2	Evangelical x 1 Anglican x 1 Pentecostal x 1	1
14	1	Anglican x 1	Anglican x 1	0
15	3	Anglican x 3	Anglican x 3	0

In total therefore, there were 6 households (out of 11 households with more than one occupant) with members of the family who had different current church affiliations and 11 people (out of 35) who had changed church affiliation.

Figure 6 - Changing religious affiliations of residents on Johnson Street from household survey

Johnson Street Religious Affiliation	**No. Christened/ Baptized**	**No. Currently Affiliated**
Anglican	12	4
Catholic	4	3
Evangelical	1	4
Jehovah Witness	1	1
Independent (London) Baptist	0	1
Moravian	1	0
Pentecostal	2	6
Rastafarian	0	1
Spiritual Baptist	14	14

During my time in the village I noted that some streets tended to have many more people from one denomination than others. For example on Johnson Street there are no recorded Seventh Day Adventists, despite this being one of the most popularly attended churches in the area, and there are many Spiritual Baptists. This was observed by community members also and there were particular streets that were seen to be Spiritual Baptist areas as well as areas which were seen as connected to particular ways of living.

Appendix II – Churches in the village

The Anglican church

The Anglican church was situated in a central position in the village, part of the same compound as the Anglican primary school. Attached to the Diocese of Trinidad and Tobago and part of the international Anglican Communion, the local church was headed by ‘Father Dominic’, the son of the previous Anglican priest, and Father Dominic’s son was headmaster of the Anglican school.

Anglicanism was brought to Trinidad as the religion of the British colonizers in 1797. The base of the Anglican church in Trinidad was located in Port of Spain, although, as for Anglicans everywhere, the ‘head’ of the church was the Archbishop of Canterbury in the UK. There was no Catholic priest based in or near the village and Father Dominic was often called on to lead community level services, such as blessing the fisherman’s boats, being the only formally-trained religious official in the village and respected as such. While the official membership of the local Anglican church was relatively large, few people attended services on a weekly basis. On the occasions I attended the usual Sunday service (based on the Anglican service book, bible readings and hymns), I was one of a small handful of people in the church, however for special services- such as when the local church was visited by Trinidad’s bishop- the church was fully attended. The Anglican church was therefore largely waning in popularity. Connected to traditionalism, the structured services, prayers and hymns were markedly different to services in the more evangelical churches. While more similar to Catholic services in terms of this structure, they lacked the keen and motivated members of the congregation that gave the Catholic services energy.

The Catholic church

The (Roman) Catholic church was based just outside the village but within walking distance, and the Catholic primary school was attached to it. This amazing building had views over the coast and a graveyard attached to it making it probably the grandest construction in the local area, and one of the most beautifully located. Catholicism was brought to Trinidad by missionaries in the 16th century and has traditionally been the main religion for the majority of the population, including along this coast. Like other Catholic churches, the church was under the spiritual leadership of the Pope in Rome, however the local area did not have a priest attached to it and so was under the leadership of a nun based in the area (who of course could not take confession or full mass). The nun undertook services at different Catholic churches along the coast on a Sunday, with services at different times so that she could move between these. Services at the local church were therefore held early on a Sunday morning, and were quite short. On some occasions, such as leading up to Christmas or Easter, joint services were held with Catholic churches along the coast. As well as being a female leader unlike the leaders of all the other churches locally, the Catholic nun was not from the local area. She shared many of the understandings I heard in other churches about the role of the Devil and the coming End of Days. While more charismatic Catholic movements were evident in churches elsewhere in Trinidad, this seemed to be less the case locally.

We were told in services the lack of a local priest was because there was a general shortage, and those who did become priests from the Caribbean region wanted to work in the USA, Canada and in Europe, or at least in other parts of Trinidad- it was implied they certainly did not want to be based ‘behind God’s back’ in this rural and cut off area of Trinidad. A priest would visit the area on occasion who was not Trinidadian but from another smaller Caribbean island and there was a sense of connectedness to other parts of Trinidad and the

Caribbean in the Catholic church that was not so evident in the other churches. The Catholic News, a locally available paper for Catholics across Trinidad contributed to this and to a sense of belonging to a national Catholic community. The paper also included details of each service so that those in church could follow the service through the paper rather than through their own books, aware that the same service was being conducted across Trinidad on that Sunday. Sermons in the services often focused on Trinidad and the world at large, again in a way that did not occur in many of the other churches.

While a range of people with different backgrounds attended the Catholic church, those in the village who were better off and better educated tended to be Catholic. The Catholic church was also associated with traditionalism and sometimes connected to *obeah* and devil-worship by some non-Catholics, however it continued to be well attended. Catholics, and the Catholic worldview, often remained distinct to many of the practices and understandings of those in the more evangelical Protestant churches (although there were still wider cosmological understandings that were also shared by Catholics).

The Evangelical church

The Evangelical church was positioned centrally in the village and had previously been run by one well-known villager who had relatively recently been replaced by another local person. While I met a number of people in the village who would call themselves 'evangelical' by church affiliation, very few of these attended the local Evangelical church. Many of these had previously attended services at the church, but some told me they had fallen out with the (previous) Pastor of this church and no longer attended this (nor any other church). At the services I attended I was one of four people in the congregation, which included the previous Pastor and his wife. Housed in a building in poor condition, the church itself was also in the process of being re-built with money from churches based in the USA and so may attract a larger congregation once this has been completed.

Services included bible readings and songs from a hymn book, sermons being led by both the current and the previous Pastor. Services did not clearly link the church with other Evangelical churches either in Trinidad or beyond, although the link to evangelical churches in the USA was more implicit. As such the services appeared to be more based around the understandings and direction of the previous Pastor, a more personal direction rather than that of a church attached to a wider denominational approach.

The Independent International Baptist Church

Headed by the one person who appeared to be respected by the vast majority of the village, the Independent International Baptist Church (IIBC) was relatively well attended and was repected by those who attended other churches. Again positioned centrally in the village, services included sermons (which were often interactive and allowed questioning and discussion), songs from a hymn book, as well as space for individual people in the congregation to be recognized and congratulated. I suspected this respect and positive feeling of the services came largely from the position of the Pastor himself who was also involved in local community groups and in local ‘churches together’ events. Called ‘the London Baptists’ locally to separate them from the Spiritual Baptists, the local church was part of a couple of similar Baptist churches in Trinidad and saw itself as broadly linked to Baptists in the UK, although the experience of the church felt very locally-led.

While people usually had their children blessed in one of the local churches, the IIBC seemed to be a more popular choice than many of the others (particularly for those who were not regular church-goers). This may have gone along with the lesser focus in the church on a commitment to regularly attending the church and becoming wholly identified with it. This was different to many other churches, although the sermons preached and understandings more broadly were similar in many ways to the other churches that demanded more of a commitment.

The Pentecostal church

The only Pentecostal church in this part of the coast, the church was based in the next village along but drew people from up and down the coast. It was very well attended on a Sunday and sometimes held study and prayer sessions during the week. The Pastor was based outside the local area but most of the time came up to give the sermon and lead the deliverance element of the service. In sermons the Pastor would often reflect on his ‘badjohn’ past, contrasting this with his life after being ‘saved’, and there was a focus on the need to also ‘save’ other members of the community so that they would be on the side of the Lord in the coming End of Days.

There was a strong and committed group of local members who would contribute and lead the services and events while the Pastor was absent, and many of these had attended Pentecostal training events elsewhere in Trinidad on how to do this. The church was linked to the Pentecostal Association of the West Indies (PAWI) but otherwise focused on more local issues and members. Services were dynamic with more singing and movement visible than in other churches, the Holy Spirit dwelling within the bodies of the congregation and expressing itself through their bodies. The spiritual gifts of many of the church members were evident in the speaking in tongues and leading in song and prayer that took place during the services. Services also lasted for many hours with collection being taken a number of times through this.

The Seventh Day Adventist church

The Seventh Day Adventist church was growing in popularity locally, and was one of the most active both socially and in keeping its members in line. As well as two services on a Saturday (which took up most of the day), there were shorter services on Sunday, Wednesday and Friday evenings led by local elders of the church. The Pastor was based outside the local area and led a few local Adventist churches, attending services at these on different Saturdays. Like the Pentecostal Pastor, many of his sermons reflected on his previous life as a 'badjohn' but services were more structured and based on singing hymns, bible readings and testimonials rather than the dynamic movement and repetitive singing in the Pentecostal churches.

Linked to Seventh Day churches in the local area and internationally, services included collections for, and reading about the work of the Adventist church elsewhere in the world, and in converting non-believers. There was an emphasis on recruiting others so that they might be 'saved' in the coming End of Days together with a strong focus on diet, health and living in a moral way- a visible morality which was distinct from, and superior to, non-Adventists in the village. This latter focus is an aspect found more generally in the Adventist faith, and books on health and diet published by the church, as well as by its most recognizible founder Ellen G. White (1827-1915, whose visions and spiritual leadership were seen as God-given gifts of prophecy which contributed to the church's doctrine), were also available locally.

Both the Seventh Day Adventist church and the Pentecostal church did not participate in local 'churches together' events, seeing their views as incompatible with these other Christian approaches. There were times when Adventists and Pentecostals did work together however, for example in the prayer and deliverance group held at the high school to keep evil spirits from inhabiting the school.

The Spiritual Baptist churches

The Spiritual Baptist religion combines elements of West African religious practices with Protestant Christianity. Services usually involve members of the congregation ‘catching the spirit’ as the Holy Spirit inhabits their bodies causing them to clap, move and shout. Also known as ‘Shouter Baptists’ for this reason- although this can be seen as a derogatory term as it was applied by non-Spiritual Baptists during colonial rule- Spiritual Baptist activities were prohibited in Trindad between 1917-1951 under the British colonial government (see Herksovits and Herskovits (1947) for an examination of some of these practices at this time). More recently however they have become one of the main religious groups in Trinidad, with Spiritual/Shouter Baptist Liberation Day being established as a national holiday in 1996 and the first Spiritual Baptist Primary School being opened along the East-West corridor while I was in the field.

There were two Spiritual Baptist churches based in the village as well as others in villages up and down the coast. The local area generally had a strong Spiritual Baptist past and influence, and there were many people who saw themselves as affiliated with the Spiritual Baptist church even if they did not regularly attend services. Both locally and in the Spiritual Baptist church more broadly, there were different splits and factions, so that the two churches in the village were not part of the same group. I attended services in both of these local churches, one of which was well attended, was centrally based and with an active Mother (and structure) of the church, while the other had significantly less people attending (on one visit, eight people), without the usual strong structure of these churches, and was based in a small, old building in a state of disrepair on the edge of the village. While I was in the field, the better attended of these two churches was undergoing some disagreements between those in leadership positions in the church and others in the congregation and as such meant that these services, and the position of the church more generally, was not operating as they usually did.

Appendix III – Notions of 'bush'

In Trinidad, the term 'bush' was used frequently, and is interesting to consider as a concept in relation to the village. Country areas were associated with underdevelopment by those based in other parts of Trinidad. Terming these areas 'bush' was pejorative, conjuring up images of backwardness and traditional ways of life in opposition to the modern, developed, urban areas. As well as being linked with bush medicine, and *obeah*, the northeast coast area was also particularly linked to Trinidad's folkloric spirit creatures, and spirits more generally. These were seen to reside mainly in the bush but were also, less frequently, connected to the rivers and the sea in the local area. Spirits might also be found around graveyards. Tobago, situated just opposite this coast, was another area also particularly associated with *obeah* and spirits, and perhaps the vicinity and links between the two (many of the older generation in the village came over from Tobago to find work in the area) has contributed to this. Encounters with *douen* and *Papa Bois* largely took place in the bush, and *Mama D'glo* could be found in rivers that flowed through it. Other spirit creatures might also live in the bush but may be encountered outside it.

The bush surrounded the village and ran alongside the main road. 'Bush' referred to both the wildly-growing vegetation that grew quickly and high around anything that was not 'cleaned',[2] and the forest-like areas in which such plants, as well as trees, grew. The majority of Trinidad was originally 'bush' that was cut down and turned into agricultural land during the colonisation of Trinidad. Initially largely left by the Spanish, the land was then worked by French planters invited to Trinidad by Spanish colonisers and areas were carved up into estates. Great swathes of bush, particularly in central Trinidad, have never been cleared

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[2] This was the term used locally for cutting back the bush. The notion of an area being 'cleaned', rather than 'cleared' for example, perhaps suggests a level of domesticity and control of matter out of place (Douglas, 1966) in such areas, implying a particular relationship to this land. The land was domestic, and should be maintained to prevent it being over-run by bush, the growth of bush making it 'dirty', clearing it making it 'clean'. This is a different sort of relationship to one which might instead imply that this process was about working *with* nature for example, or maintaining a broader equilibrium.

but along the north coast, much of the land was developed into estates. Orchards were planted, growing nutmeg, coffee, chocolate, citrus amongst other produce, and roads and paths cut through this to allow access and transportation of goods. With the end of these estates sections were bought by, or given to local families, and much of this land still belonged to these families. Opportunities to do anything much with this land was limited however- roads and paths were no longer maintained and so access was not easy, and constantly clearing the land of bush, before agricultural work was even undertaken, was a major task. Some (more accessible) land was worked however. These were family ‘gardens’ and they produced fruit and vegetables for personal consumption and sale locally and in markets further afield. Areas of this land also provided crops that did not need to be cultivated but could be taken for sale with little effort required in producing them. Yams and other root vegetables as well as coconuts, papaya and bananas fell into this category, although these latter items were not always abundant. Some areas of land were sectioned off and displayed ‘no trespassing’ signs. These could be seen from the main road, as could the coffee pods, cacao and nutmegs that were left to rot on the trees and were not worth harvesting. In general there was a desire for items from outside Trinidad, imported goods being favoured over locally produced items. For example, despite growing premium grade coffee and cocoa (both locally), Nescafe instant coffee was the coffee of choice throughout Trinidad and imported chocolate was predominantly that which was sold. In the supermarkets in Port of Spain apples and even tomatoes were imported from Florida, linking Trinidad as a consumer to other nations rather than a producer of consumables for others. Trinidad has become a nation of importers, of consumers, rather than exporters and producers.

This preference for goods from outside Trinidad and the shift to becoming consumers, puts in place a clear break from the conditions of colonialism, indentured labour and slavery. Working on the land for others was not seen as a desirable job, also illustrated in the term ‘massa day done’ as vocalised by Trinidad’s first prime minister, Dr. Eric Williams following Trinidad’s

Independence. Such a phrase was often quoted to me as a reason why people did not work the estates. Consuming items from outside also implies a change in power balance- Trinidadians did not need to labour but were part of the 'modern' world as consumers, a more powerful position. The local area and its estates (now bush), were a key place of production of these exported goods in the colonial period and the connection to this older, less 'modern' way of life might be another reason why the area was seen as under-developed or backward.

The 'bush' was therefore largely overgrown estate ground. In Trinidad's fertile soil, bush constantly encroached on roads, gardens and cleared areas. It constantly needed cutting back, and was often done so by those working on local employment schemes like CEPEP. While those who worked CEPEP used 'whackers' (petrol-powered strimmers), cutlasses were used to clear the way by individuals going into the bush. Cutlasses were also used to kill snakes and it was good sense not to enter the bush without such a weapon. Men were therefore often seen walking down the road in the village with large cutlasses on their belts or in their hands. Neighbours who did not maintain the bush around their houses were often complained about, being seen as not keeping the area 'clean', and allowing snakes to get closer to houses. Similarly complaints were made against CEPEP for not paying for enough work to keep the roads and communal areas well-maintained, the overgrowth of bush making the village untidy as well as difficult to navigate.

During the *ol'time*, I was told, bush was kept more under control, as well as the estates being cleared. People paid attention to their land- they worked on it, they cared. Now areas were being left to become overgrown and houses were abandoned so that once 'cleaned' and controlled areas become taken over by the bush once more. This relates to wider understanding of the colonial period as being one of control and stability, where people worked rather than hung around, where space was ordered and the wild bush kept at bay. Nature was kept under control and there were fewer problems with snakes and spiders (both of which could harm) coming into living areas as happened now that the bush was more overgrown. Another consequence of lack of care of the local landscape was fewer bushes grown nearby that could be used for bush medicine. People did not focus on growing these bushes as they did in the past, and it was harder to reach the plants that were needed to treat various ailments.

The bush therefore had its own form of agency (although not soul), relentlessly re-growing and encroaching on lived-in land, pushing the boundary between the wild and the domesticated. It was a place where one might encounter spirits and spirit creatures, poisonous snakes and spiders, and hunters or other men with cutlasses. Crucially and more latterly, the bush was now linked to crime and criminals, seen as the greatest danger with entering these places in contemporary times. Large areas were said to have been cleared to grow marijuana, and on occasion I saw police helicopters and smoke billowing up from particular areas and was told that the army were burning these marijuana fields. However the greatest dangers with the drug trade in the bush were said to come with the people connected to this and automatic trap gun systems that had been set up to guard such sites. These were said to fire indiscriminately and ‘automatically’, and they were given most frequently as reasons why the local bush was dangerous.

Bandits on the run from other areas of Trinidad, as well as locals, might also hide in the bush for months without being discovered. There were stories of such occasions, including one of the area’s most notorious criminals who kidnapped a woman and kept her with him in the bush for many months, knowing the area so well that he could come and go as he wished without being found. Local people who wanted to avoid running into the police locally also lived in the bush, coming in and out as they needed. Hunting, including illegal hunting (outside hunting season, and hunting of restricted species) also occurred in nearby bush, and people from other parts of Trinidad came to the local area to buy 'bush meat' (often *manicou*[3] or iguana), seen as delicacies and particularly desired around Christmas. Plants needed for bush medicine might also require trips into the bush to locate particular plants with healing powers. Local people, should they have reason to (which may include playing there as a child), might learn areas of the bush well. This was seen as impressive knowledge to have and marked someone out as a 'local' person, someone with experience living or working in the bush, but also a person who might need to have such knowledge, so potentially a little dangerous. Areas of un-cleared bush historically have a relationship with hiding from authorities, a place one might go in order not to be discovered. Whe Whe, the antecedent to the gambling game Play Whe (which is now nationalised and government-run), used to be conducted illegally in the bush and 'bush rum' was alcohol manufactured illegally by local people. Individuals might also go to parts of the bush for spiritual experiences, for example to meditate, smoke marijuana and contemplate the bible in peace. This links to local Rastafarian ideas found locally and to concepts also espoused by the Earth People (Littlewood, 1993).

The term 'bush' therefore encapsulates a range of ideas: underdevelopment rather than the modern, tradition and traditional ideas, and hidden, slightly illegal (although not necessarily dangerous) activities. Spirits, spirit creatures and spiritual experiences were also present as an undercurrent, interlinking with bush activities. The bush might be cast as 'dangerous', but there was also a sometimes trickster-like ambivalence about it. Like the spirit creatures it contained (and *gombos*, *soucoyants* and shape-shifters), its positioning was unclear in an evangelical Christian binary system of good and evil, despite its dangerousness. Perhaps, like its continual re-growth and encroachment, it threatened to break down this easy system, bringing disorder to an ordered world. Bush as disorder, as encroaching and overthrowing the previous controlled and organised landscape of colonialism and the *ol'time*, also serves as comparison to the dangers of the disorder of the out-of-control state and the crime and violence that existed in the country at large. These too were dangers

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[3] West Indian term for opussum.

that have encroached on the organisation and safety of the *ol'time*, and could be linked to the increased presence of the figure associated with bringing disorder – the Devil. While the Devil could be linked to disorder in the wider state, he was not linked to the dangers of the bush in the same way- although he may be invoked at other times of disorder, such as carnival. Devilish spirits were more clearly linked to dangers in places of risk, such as roads (usually the busy roads) and 'town' (particularly certain poor neighbourhoods), which were perceived as more dangerous. These were, of course, outside the local area and were perhaps more easily viewed in black and white terms, 'they' definitely have the Devil while 'we' are less sure.

The village was connected to the bush, but also to the sea, another location that was seen as connected to the spiritual realm and had an ambivalent place in local cosmology. The sea had healing powers and taking sea baths was prescribed for a range of afflictions, but at the same time its use by Spiritual Baptists, Orisha workers and Hindus for ceremonies was linked to powerful (nefarious) spirits that resided in the water. The sea itself was recognized as a powerful force that should be respected, many swimmers and fishermen meeting their death in it locally, particularly those who lacked local knowledge. The sea was not evil but again it contained ambivalent aspects- providing food and a livelihood for many locally, but also dangerous, unable to be controlled, and recognized as a place where a large number of escaping slaves had jumped into and drowned, rather than accept their punishment for running away[4]. The sea was also connected to the drug trade, fishermen seen as heavily involved in (or at least very aware of) much of this trade locally. This coast was a key area through which drugs were moved and the northeast coast had less coastguard protection than the other side of the island near Port of Spain. Fishermen might legitimately be in the water overnight while other vessels were more restricted, fishermen seen as supplementing the money

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[4] There are competing versions of this story, and the slaves who jumped from the rocks by the lighthouse was a tale I heard also from visiting friends from elsewhere in Trinidad. Another version suggests it was the Amerindians who jumped from this rock en masse, when outnumbered in their fight against the early (Spanish) colonial forces.

earned from their catches with the movement of drugs. Platforms and walkways down to the water, rental houses that overlooked the sea, and fishing boats that had hoods up were all seen as potentially linked to the drug trade. Like encounters with spirits, dangerous and drug-related activities were mostly seen to occur at night.

Appendix IV – Photographs of the village

Figure 7 - Abandoned house in the village, painted with the letters 'PMN' to indicate local support for the (largely Afro-Trinidadian) political party.

Figure 8 - Inside the Catholic church.

Figure 9 - Shirley's commercial herbal medication. This picture shows cures for HIV/AIDS and cancer.

Figure 10 - The fishing pier.

A fisherman, piled fishing nets and two boats in the water are visible.

Figure 11 - Old-style wooden housing along the main road through the village.

Figure 12 – Road protesters angry at the poor state of the only road in and out of their coastal village

Figure 13 - Pentecostal roadshow visiting one of the villages in the local area.

Figure 14 – Catholics, dressed in red and waving palms, walk the stages of the cross along the coastal road on Good Friday.

Figure 15 - Paula’s bush medicine treatment for my tendonitis: noni wine applied to the skin, wrapped in warmed noni leaf and masking tape.